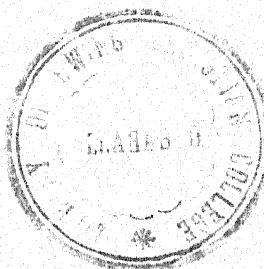


*Smooth Sailing Letters*

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# *Smooth Sailing*

## LETTERS

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by

L. E. FRAILEY

Illustrations by J. Alphonso Koenig



NEW YORK: 1938  
PRENTICE-HALL

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## *The Eventful History of This Book*

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THIS IS A BRAND NEW, REVISED, ENLARGED EDITION OF A book which has gone to town in a big way because it meets a business need. Practically no effort ever has been made to advertise or sell it, and yet many thousand copies have been distributed in many companies—by executives who realize that letters can be made a powerful force to increase sales and win goodwill.

The first draft of SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS was really never *written*, not in the usual, formal way. It was *dictated* from some notes I had made for some talks previously given under the auspices of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce. The folks who had heard those talks wanted copies—and so a book was born.

Furthermore, the dictating was done between four and eight o'clock one Saturday morning, the only time I could find to squeeze it in. You see, the company for which I was then working was holding a sales contest, and that particular Saturday happened to be the last day of the month. The salesmen had been urged to close the contest with a bang. They were supposed to work not less than eight hours.

Our office closed at noon on Saturday, and just to show the salesmen that we could practice what we preached a lot of us resolved to put in our eight hours by starting at four in the morning. It did seem rather foolish at the time, but I have often thought that without that spectacular idea SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS might never have been dictated. When my secretary got to the office at eight, there was a long row of cylinders on her desk, waiting to be transcribed. You should have seen her face.

Of course, I did not suspect at the time how popular my book would turn out to be. That was because I did not realize how badly such a book was needed in business, or the good influence it could have on people who write letters.

But almost immediately, from here, there, and everywhere, requests for copies began to come in. How people found out that there was such a book, I don't know. Probably one man just told another. One morning, for example, a businessman called me on the telephone. He seemed quite angry at first, but it turned out that he was only joking.

"Frailey," he said, "you don't know me, but I wanted to tell you that you are responsible for my getting to bed at three o'clock this morning. A friend of mine gave me a copy of your book yesterday, and after I undressed I thought I would read a few pages. Phooey on you and your book! When I started to read it, I couldn't stop. And how about sending me twenty copies? I want to pass them around to some of our men who write letters."

Now that's a true story, one of many that I could tell you to prove how businessmen like SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS. Once they get their teeth in a copy, they eat it up—and then come back for more. It has all been very sur-

prising and exciting. But after all, it only shows what happens when a man meets a real business need. I suppose there is no mystery about the popularity of this book after all.

Many large companies have used SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS in their better-letter programs—putting copies in the hands of every dictator to make him conscious of the good, or the harm, any letter can do. I mean companies like Montgomery Ward, International Harvester, Jewel Tea, Ralston Purina, the Dictaphone Corporation, and many, many others. And even companies in foreign countries. They all seem to find good use for SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS.

As you can guess from the title, I believe that letter writing can be made a simple thing. Many books have been written on the subject, but the fundamentals could have been explained in a few chapters of any one of them. They all seem to make difficult an art that is easy to understand.

SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS is different. It gives you the facts that you need to know in the shortest space possible. It is for busy folks who need to budget their time. You can read SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS in an hour or two, but it will make you letter-conscious. You will start thinking about the letters you write and how to make them better. That's the beginning of progress.

Business is a contact of personalities—both inside and out. Inside, the employees of a company rub shoulders every day. If the contacts are pleasing, the morale is good and the work more efficient. Everybody coöperates. Outside, the contact is between the company and the public. The salesman rings the doorbell. The delivery boy leaves a package. The collector presents a bill.

These contacts are face to face. But there are others just as important. In the morning paper you see an ad. There is to be a sale of shoes tomorrow. The ad is a contact between you and the store. The ad is a bridge, a connecting link.

So it is with letters. Every letter that goes out of your company is a contact between the company and the reader. The contact may be agreeable or unpleasant. Ultimately, it may mean more or less business from that reader. Your letters are salesmen of goodwill. They draw no salary and turn in no expense account. But they represent your house just the same as do the folks who carry your samples. It is terribly important that every letter written on your stationery be friendly, forceful, dignified, and human. You agree to that, don't you?

Now let me make a confession. You see, all through this book I want to be frank with you. I have no tricks to play or secrets to withhold. I believe it is impossible to teach anyone exactly how to write a business letter. Letters cannot be measured with a yardstick. I cannot say, "Do this and your letter will be good," or, "Fail to do that and it will be poor." There are no absolute rules. Each letter is a problem in itself. All I can hope to give you is a few ideas out of my experience, which, according to your own personality, you may interpret and use to get results.

All that I know about letters I have learned in the School of Experience. It may be possible to trim and cut according to psychological principles, but that will have to be left to the professors who study and teach those things. Yes, I have learned some facts you may need to know, but I will give them to you as one businessman talking to another. I cannot hope to carve my paragraphs or mold my sentences with the skill of the literary man. SMOOTH

SAILING LETTERS is a book of common sense—served on a plain platter without sauce. It is the only way I know how to write.

On the other hand, I am sincere in believing it will do you a lot of good to read SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS—not because I happen to be the one who did the job, but because the story it tells is all so true. It will pay any business executive to give some of his time and thought to better letters. It will pay any man or woman who writes letters to find out how to do them better. The person who wins respect for his house by the letters he writes is sure to get ahead. You cannot afford to write poor letters.

It's a fascinating game—played by you and the reader. How to get his attention. . . . How to weld a chain of facts that he will understand. . . . How to win his confidence. . . . How to make him act. . . . He gets so many letters. How will you make yours stand out from all the rest?

In the old days, a letter was sure to be read, no matter how poorly it was written. When Postmaster Lincoln stuck in his hat band the letters that came his way, it was a great event to get a letter. "Here's one for you," said Abe, and you rushed home so that the whole family could see it. It was something to be proud of—something to show the neighbors.

But not now. More than a million letters are mailed every hour in this country. The majority never get to first base. They are all so much alike. They start out so bravely. The reader glances quickly at the first paragraph, the signature; he yawns, scowls—into the waste paper basket they go. What a pity! So much hope wasted, so much time lost—all because the letters were dull and drab. They could not get the readers' attention. Costly little soldiers

—millions of them murdered every day—victims of poor generalship!

The letters written in your company become its history. They win favor or they lose it. There is no middle ground. You have certain ideals and traditions. Your letters must reflect them. There has never been, and never will be, any justification for the sloppy or the unfriendly or the lusterless business letter. None of those should ever be written on your stationery.

Well, enough of this introduction. We will get to know each other better as we go along. Approach SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS with an open mind. Quite humbly but sincerely, I can promise that this little book will help to make your letters better.

L. E. FRAILEY

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*Here Is What You Are Going to Read . . .*

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*How to Use the Rating Scale*

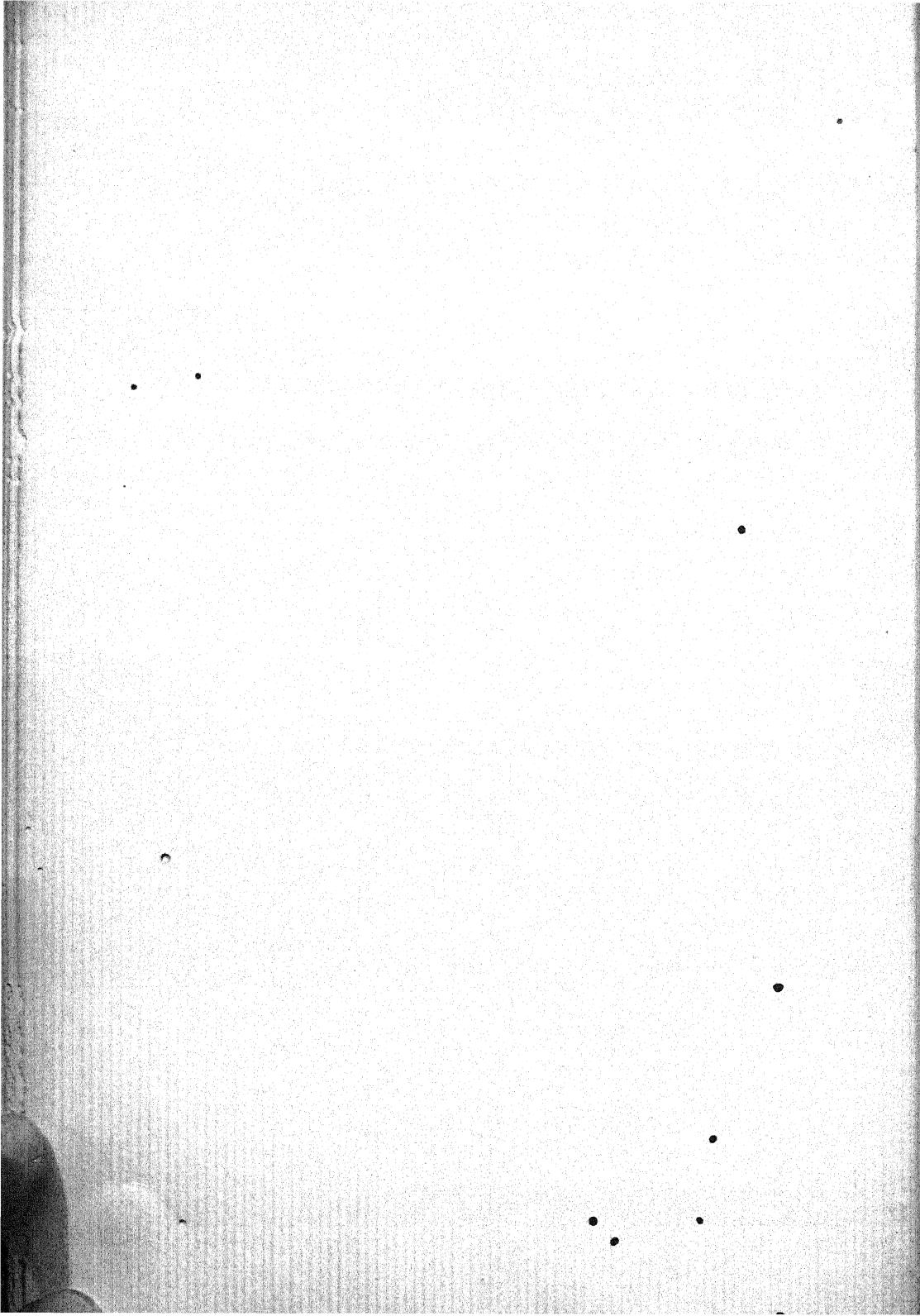
On each of the first six points, grade the letter 15, 10, 5,  
or 0.

- 15 if exceptionally good
- 10 if above average
- 5 if doubtful
- 0 if very poor

On Point 7, if the answer is "Yes," give 10 points; if  
"No," give none. Thus, the letter can rate a maximum  
of 100.

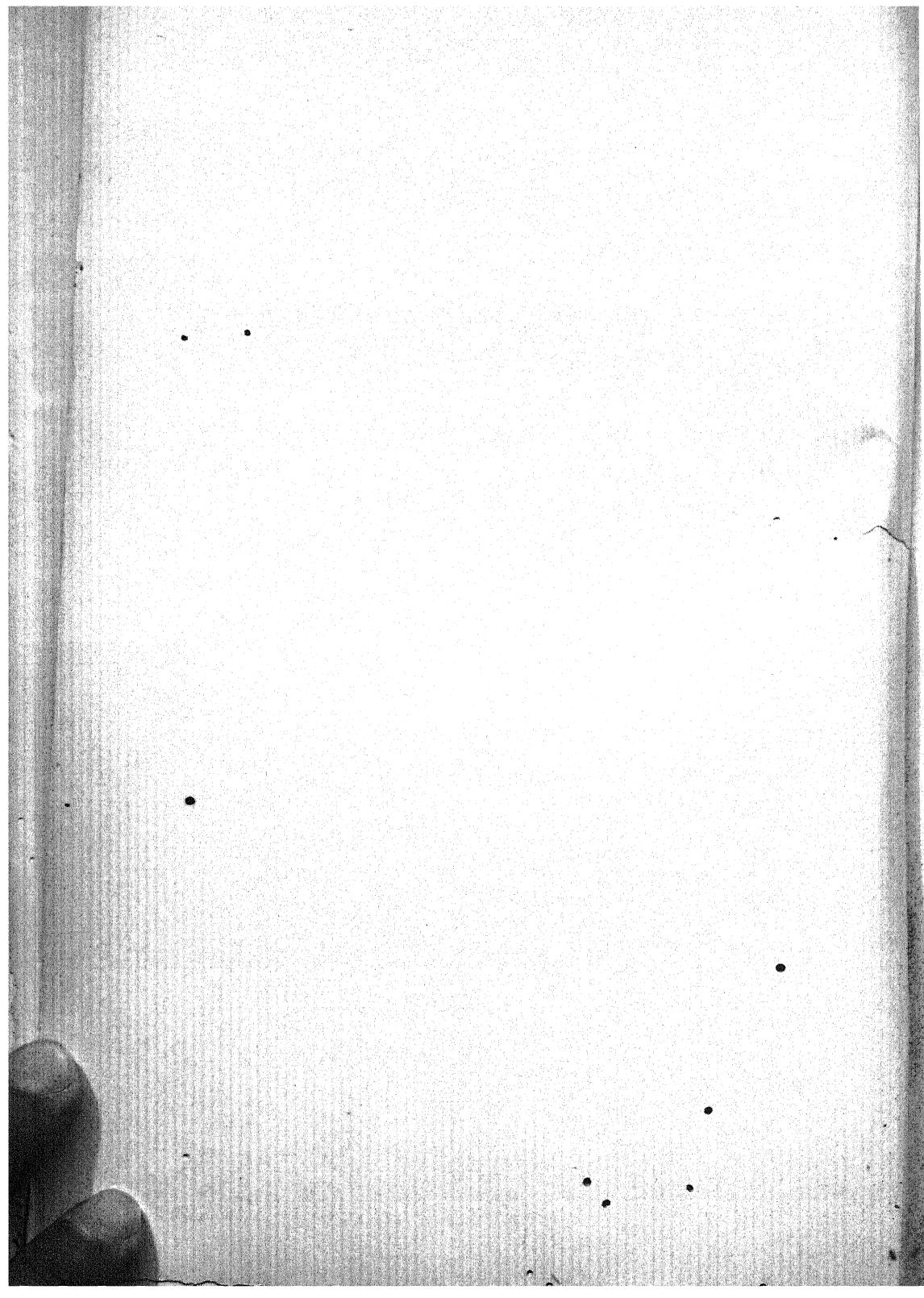
THE FRAILEY RATING SCALE FOR BUSINESS LETTERS

		Points
1. Appearance.	How well is the letter groomed? Is the letter-head attractive without being wild? Are the grammar and punctuation correct? Does the letter sit nicely on the page? Is the typing good and free from erasures? Does the letter appeal to the eye as one easy to read?	
2. Language.	Are the words short and natural? Would the average person know their meaning? Is the letter free from rubber-stamp expressions? Does it carry the distinction of simplicity? Is the language the same that the writer would use if he were talking to the reader?	
3. Argument.	Has the story in the letter been well told? Do the facts seem complete? Is all the information presented that the reader needs? Does the letter <i>ring true</i> ? Does the writer seem to know what he is talking about? Does the purpose of the letter stand out sharply?	
4. Carpentry.	What kind of craftsman does the writer prove to be? Between the lines can you see the skeleton that all good letters must have? What about the Star, the Chain, and the Hook—are they all there? Do the paragraphs cling together? Does the story move along?	
5. Personality.	Does the writer succeed in getting <i>himself</i> into the letter? Does he take the reader on an interesting journey? Does he get out of the rut of the commonplace? Does the letter sparkle with originality? Is the interest sustained from beginning to end?	
6. Spirit.	Will the letter win good will for the company? Is it free from sarcasm, ridicule, anger, and bluster? Does the reader get the impression that he is being well served? Is it a letter the writer would be proud to show to the head of his company?	
7. Result.	And now, beyond all of those six points, what general impression does the letter give? Does the writer seem to have accomplished his purpose? Does the letter <i>do the job</i> ?	
	Total Rating	



*Smooth Sailing Letters*

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## *Throw Away Those Rubber Stamps*

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WHAT IS A GOOD BUSINESS LETTER? CAN YOU TELL ME? Well, I think a good letter does by mail what you would do verbally if time and space permitted. It should be as human as you are human, as natural as you are natural. Its personality should be *your* personality.

All right. What sort of a person are you anyway? Are you as cold as an oyster? Stiff as a poker? Antiquated as a spinning wheel? Formal as the King's butler? Then Heaven help you—go fishing—you should not be writing a business letter.

But I doubt if the average human being is cut to any such pattern. He is usually friendly at heart, sympathetic by inheritance, natural among his friends, and simple in his speech. If you are that kind of person—stick around—there is hope for you. All that you must do to write letters—good letters—is to express, or learn how to express, *your own personality*.

You may do it in one way, and someone else in another. It's the result that counts. You are out to collect some money, to sell some goods, to answer a complaint—you have a purpose to accomplish, and if you succeed, the let-

*Throw Away Those Rubber Stamps*

ter has done the job. No two letters are going to be exactly alike, because no two personalities are exactly alike. It would be a mistake for us all to try to express our personalities in the same way.

Your letter is just *you*—reaching out across space—giving the reader the message that you would give him in the same way if he were seated at your desk. What difference does it make whether he is a thousand miles away or only a few feet? You are *talking* in either case.

But the trouble is that many of the men and women who write business letters do not let their true personalities shine through. They become creatures “with eyes severe and beards of formal cut.” They put on long black coats and high silk hats. They turn down the corners of their mouths and write letters as the undertaker buries the dead.

They are still writing in the spirit of 1776. They imagine that a letter is a dreadful, formal thing—they become unnatural, stiff, and conventional. They destroy all the sparkle, the personality, and the life that a letter needs to be interesting. They make their letters sound like income tax reports or legal documents.

What do I mean by the spirit of 1776? Well, here is what I would hope never to find in your letters:

You kindly inform, and you beg to advise  
You have before you my kind favor  
You have carefully noted the contents  
You are in receipt of my reply of the 17th instant  
You send herewith, and attach hereto  
You are mailing me under separate cover  
You will bear with me in this connection  
You thank me for past favors, and wish to remain  
You wish to state that according to your records

But you don't *talk* that way, do you? You don't say to your friend at the office, "I wish to advise that I will be over to see you tonight." You don't say to your sweetheart, "Darling, I now beg to state that it is time for me to depart." No, you don't talk that way. Then why do you put on paper a language different from the one you use in everyday speech?

Here is a letter that once came my way from the manager of a big city hotel:

DEAR MR. FRAILEY:

We are in receipt of your kind favor of recent date, and thank you for the reservation contained therein, which we have booked in accordance with your valued wishes.

Assuring you of our appreciation of your kind indulgence, and looking forward with extreme pleasure to your esteemed patronage, we beg to remain,

Very truly yours,

All that it took to write that letter was a few rubber stamps:

WE ARE IN RECEIPT OF  
YOUR KIND FAVOR  
RECENT DATE  
RESERVATION CONTAINED THEREIN  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
YOUR VALUED WISHES  
ASSURING YOU OF OUR APPRECIATION  
YOUR KIND INDULGENCE  
LOOKING FORWARD WITH EXTREME PLEASURE  
YOUR ESTEEMED PATRONAGE  
WE BEG TO REMAIN



*Throw Away Those Rubber Stamps*

There you have it—rubber-stamp talk—the spirit of 1776—written as your great-grandfather would have written. Shades of the past! Silken breeches, silver buckles! Powdered hair, lacy cuffs!

Now why didn't the manager of that hotel write me a friendly, natural little note? Why didn't he say, "We are mighty glad you are coming to stay with us a while. We have set aside a comfortable room for you and will do all we can to make you feel at home"?

Here's another:

We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 21st instant, and in replying have pleasure to advise that delivery was made against your order 7062.

We await your check in settlement thereof, for which we thank you in anticipation. We are, dear Sirs,

Yours faithfully,

Does anyone ever talk in the language of that letter? I doubt it. Can you imagine someone saying to you, "Regarding the five dollars you lost to me on the Michigan game of the 21st instant, I await your check in settlement thereof, for which I thank you in anticipation"? Or would you say to your wife, "I beg to acknowledge receipt of the information that we are to play bridge tonight and I have the pleasure to advise that I will be on hand to enjoy the same"?

All right, that's absurd. I admit it. But why can't people be their natural selves on paper? You tell me—I don't know.

What would be your reaction to a salesman who stopped at your desk and said, "The company which it is my privilege to represent is in receipt of your kind inquiry of even

date regarding our instantaneous heater, and I herewith wish to state that I am now ready to demonstrate the same at your earliest convenience"?

You wouldn't be much interested, would you? That just isn't the natural way for one human being to talk to another. Do you think I am exaggerating? Then listen to the closing paragraph of a letter that I once got from the dean of a business college. It went like this: "In the hope that you will decide to prove the merit of our course by spending a term with us in the near future, may we request the favor of a reply stating whether or not we may anticipate your patronage."

Would that kind of writing make a student out of you? Of course not. The instruction might turn out to be as dull as the letter. You wouldn't care to chance it.

Here is a verse that I encountered somewhere, to be sung to the tune of "The Old Oaken Bucket." You might call it the theme song of the rubber-stamp writers.

The old business phrases, the custom-bound phrases,  
The moth-eaten phrases to which we all cling,  
The hackneyed expressions, the formal expressions,  
The icy impressions—to thee do we sing.

You see them everywhere—these custom-bound phrases—sometimes in places where you would least expect them. Here on my desk, for example, is a letter from one of the famous book clubs which begins, "We are in receipt of your letter of recent date." Here is one from the mayor of a great city, ending with, "I trust that it will be your pleasure to bear with me in this connection." All right, I know what you are saying: "Politicians are not supposed to know any better." But this one is a college man and his speeches are marvels of simplicity.

*Throw Away Those Rubber Stamps*

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A friend of mine once showed me a watch that he had just inherited from his great-grandfather. It was big and funny, but it did keep split-second time.

"You know," he said to me, "I'll bet the company that made this watch would be glad to know it is still running perfectly. I'll write and find out how old it really is."

And this is the answer that came back:

In response to your kind inquiry regarding movement 2402625, we wish to advise that our records show the date of manufacture to be July 2, 1892. We note your expression of appreciation of our product, and trust this information will be of interest to you.

Of interest to *him*? What a gosh-awful thing to say to a customer who was trying to pay tribute to that company. And all because the writer could think only in rubber-stamp lingo! He had a chance to be warm and friendly, and instead he was as cold as a tombstone on a winter's day.

Let me show you a few more lusty specimens from my museum of prehistoric language. A big St. Louis department store tells me, "Assuring you we are appreciative of your valued patronage, we beg to remain." The head of a large cotton goods mill says, "We will await with interest your advice in this connection." An advertising manager—honest, no fooling—writes, "It is desired to thank you." The circulation manager of a celebrated magazine closes a letter to me with, "Trusting this may pass your judgment." A high official in a neighboring country says, "I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant." A college graduate, wanting a job, ends his letter, "Thanking you for your kind indulgence, and hoping to hear from you in the near future, I remain yours respectfully."



—TO THEE DO WE SING

Well, I could go on, but what's the use? You never hear it spoken, but you read it every day—this rubber-stamp language of the dead, dead past. But why? Where did these bromides originate? Who started this mess? Well, we must hang the blame on our ancestral tree. We inherited the habit. It was your great-great-great grandfather who lived before the time of typewriters or dictating machines who took his quill pen in hand and "begged to state" that he was "the obedient servant" of my great-great-great uncle. And my great-great-great uncle went right back at him in the same unnatural way.

Why? Well, to answer that question, you will have to step across the ocean and consider Merrie Olde England in the days when business was a simple, formal thing. Let me tell you the story of the Butcher, the Tailor, and the Candlestick Maker.

In those days, it was only the upper class in England that was educated. The lower class folks did all the heavy work, and the middle class were the merchants. These tradesmen looked to the nobility for much of their business. But when a merchant addressed a lord he was supposed to "spread it on thick," to be very servile, and to write in a way that would express his great admiration for the superior being who was buying his boots or eating his meat.

Naturally, then, the tradesman would begin, "I have the honor to address your Lordship," and he would end, "I beg to remain, your obedient servant." He had to be full of respect or he might lose the Lord's patronage, or even his own head. So a formal, stilted style of writing developed.

Finally, these ancestors of ours decided they wanted to be free. They sailed to America and began to do all sorts

of things they couldn't do before. But they kept right on using those queer, servile expressions. Perhaps they got a kick out of writing to each other as they had once written to the nobility. Anyway, that is the language our ancestors used in their letters, and a lot of folks are still using it.

It's all so funny—and so sad!

We beg to advise you, and wish to state  
That yours has arrived of recent date.  
We have it before us, its contents noted;  
Hherewith enclosed are the prices quoted.  
Attached you will find, as per your request,  
The sample you wanted; and we would suggest  
• Regarding the matter and due to the fact  
That up to this moment your order we've lacked,  
We hope you will not delay it unduly,  
And we beg to remain, yours very truly.

Read that ancient lullaby aloud—read it in good Yankee nasal. Maybe then you will resolve never again to let those trite phrases creep into your letter.

But the modern, up-to-date letter writer tries very hard to shake off that inheritance. His creed is to be natural. Jim Luke, for example, seems to be seated across your desk—just talking. There is nothing stilted or formal about the way he writes. You can't help liking his letter.

DEAR MR. FRAILEY:

My name is Luke. Jim Luke.

I'm an ex-Bowery watchman. I've been also a contractor's checker, a deck laborer, and a porter in a waterfront saloon. I've slept in parks, bunked in dis-

*Throw Away Those Rubber Stamps*

mal lodging houses, hungered and thirsted, and had a heck of a time in general. But in spite of all these things, I've had an unbending will-power, a keen sense of humor, and the kind of imagination that lifts a man out of the commonplace. Which has helped a lot, of course!

Inspirational bunk to the contrary, I believe chance plays as big a share as anything in the making or the breaking of a man. Take me, for instance!

Before I kayoed that stick-up fellow outside the car-barns on 14th Street, and saved a college man from the licking of his life, what was I? Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Frailey. Just an average, plodding laborer with a vivid imagination. But that K. O. brought a new influence into my life. The college man was grateful. Acquaintance ripened into friendship and my new-found friend introduced me to the world of books and ideas. I studied—like a man who meant business.

English, literature, languages, history—I tackled them all. Became a stenographer, and landed a job in a big New York advertising agency! Plugged away for a couple of years, tackling direct mail copy, soliciting anything and everything in the way of education that my routine would permit!

Now I'm ready for the next step. I've a hunch that I would make a pretty handy, reliable chap in the advertising or sales division of some live company, working under a man who wouldn't expect too much brilliancy at the outset, a man with patience to encourage a more than willing worker to do his best.

I have no high-hatted ideas about salary. I'm a stenographer and a good one. I'd be darned glad to start at that.

Won't you be a regular fellow and try to dig up some

place where Jim Luke can hang his hat and coat and get down to work?

Earnestly yours,

JIM LUKE

Here is another interesting letter—written by another fellow who wanted a job. It's a rather good letter—until you come to the last paragraph. Listen!

DEAR SIR:

I have just finished reading your wonderful book, I DARE YOU, and I am asking you now for a job. Maybe now that you know what I want, you will start to throw this letter away, but I am daring you to finish reading it.

I am a boy eighteen years old. I have had only one year in high school but have been going to night school for six years. Right now I am working in a grocery store for ten dollars a week. My father cannot find work, and as I am supporting him and my sister, ten dollars does not go very far.

I mean to keep on going to night school, I am daring myself to be a somebody in this world, but if I don't get a better job soon, there will be no use in trying to stick to my dare. That does not sound very spirited but it is the cold truth.

Now that is my story, and I DARE YOU to give me a job, and if you have no vacancy, I DARE YOU to find one.

Hoping to hear from you in the near future, and wishing to merit your indulgence in this matter, I remain,

Very truly yours,

Well, what do you say? Not bad for a kid to write, was it? But he wrote one paragraph too many. He couldn't resist getting out the old rubber stamp at the end. Maybe his father told him how to close a business letter. I don't know. But he rose to a fine climax with "I DARE YOU to find one" and then spoiled it all. Like a lot of older people—he didn't know when to stop. The show was over, but he had to bring down the curtain in the old conventional way.

But just one thing more! There are some folks who can't take an inch—they always want a mile. I suppose that what I have written in this chapter has planted some seed that will grow into plants marvelous to behold. Some of you will carry the thing to the extreme, and when the boss calls you down for being a swing fan in your writing, you will say, "Well, Mr. Frailey told me to write as I talk."

But I have not told you to put a lot of silly slang, or jazzy pep, or unwarranted familiarity into your letters. If you do that, don't blame me. You are simply being natural in the wrong way. Lincoln did not begin his Gettysburg Address:

Fourscore and seven years ago, old top, we founded a  
new  
Nation, conceived in Liberty, you tell the world. . . .

No, all I have said was to take off your old gray bonnet, throw away those rubber stamps. Clean out the old moth-eaten expressions. Give your own friendly personality a chance. Be natural. Let your letters talk as you would talk. That is the first great essential in the writing of good business letters.

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*Grandpa, Where Do You Put Your Beard?*

WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE OLD-TIME EXPRESSIONS. Now let's turn to words—the ammunition of the letter writer. The problem is how to use them. Some people scatter their words like bird-shot—others know how to pick out one bullet that swiftly and surely flies to its mark.

Letter writers need a good vocabulary. It isn't so hard to get one if you make a habit of looking up the words you don't understand. But most of us are too lazy for that. Of course, to put a word in your tool chest you must actually make use of it. Do it purposely until you are sure it has become a part of your vocabulary.

There is always the best word for every thought. Any book of synonyms will prove that for each shade of meaning there is the one best word. But the problem is to know them all so well that you will always be able to use the right one in the right place. Nothing is funnier—or sadder—than to hear someone throwing words down the wrong alley.

I once got a letter that began, "From your inquiry, your interest in the within is axiomatic." I've been scratching my head ever since, wondering what the fellow

meant by "axiomatic." Evidently the word was a favorite pet of the writer—he couldn't resist taking it out for a walk.

The good letter writer chooses his words thriftily. It is a question of quality, not quantity. But to some people words are words, just as "pigs is pigs." Most amateur writers overdo the adjectives. And the bigger the word, the better they like it! But big words, spent carelessly, only give the impression that the writer is trying to strut. Big words are an impediment to clear writing—they are as helpful as overshoes would be in a footrace. It is the short, simple word that strikes home. It does not take a sledge hammer to drive a nail.

A friend of mine in Canada once sent me an essay on the use of big words. I think you will enjoy reading a part of it. I did. It goes like this:

I was cutting down the hedge when a small man with spectacles, and a book under his arm, came up, stopped, and looked on.

Then, pointing to my handiwork, he remarked:

"You find the nettles very difficult to eradicate?"

I said I found them hard to keep down.

"They disseminate themselves most luxuriantly," he said.

I replied that they spread like the dickens.

"But they have their utility in the economy of Nature," he said.

I replied that Nature was welcome to them as far as I was concerned.

He then remarked that it was most salubrious weather, and I agreed that it had been a fine day. But he was afraid that the aridity of the season was deleterious to the crops, and I replied that the potatoes were doing badly. After that, I think it occurred to him that we did not speak the same language, and with a "Good evening" he passed on and I returned to the attack on the nettles.

I wonder how words originated. My guess is as good as anyone's, so I will tell you what it is.

I like to imagine that thousands of years ago, before anyone knew how to talk, two of our ancestors may have been walking in the woods. One of them doesn't notice that in his path is coiled a poisonous snake—ready to spring and strike. The one walking behind sees this snake. He remembers that only a short time ago a member of their tribe was bitten by the same kind of snake and died within an hour.

He wants to warn his comrade, but there are no words for him to use. Just the same, he lets out a loud "hissss!" imitating as best he can the noise the reptile makes. The man in front hears the warning. He jumps back. His life is saved.

Isn't it reasonable to think that the word "hiss" came from the sound made by a snake? Doesn't the word "buzz" just about describe the noise made by the bee, and isn't "whine" symbolic of a cat? Doesn't "roar" suggest the noise of the lion, and "bark" that of the dog?

•So I like to think that the first words originated in the efforts of primitive people to imitate by sound the objects and the beasts by which they were surrounded. It is my belief that those words are the most vivid—that they are the ones you should use whenever possible.

Some letter writers or talkers have just one word for every occasion. To the bright young things of today everything is "terrific" or "the nuts." Whenever you find anyone who rides a few words to death, it simply means that his vocabulary is so small that he has to use one word for a multitude of meanings.

You have heard, perhaps, the story that is told of Guy de Maupassant. In order to improve his style and his feeling for the use of the right word, he would sit for hours on the door step of his home and watch the horses which went by. It was finally his boast that he could use just one sentence to describe each of a dozen white horses that passed him within an hour, and do it so well that you would be able to pick the right horse every time.

For example, some things smell. Others have odor. Some have fragrance. Some have scent. Others, aroma. But to some people all of the things to which, separately, these five words might be applied, just smell.

The banker walks, the lover strolls, the old man patters along, the baby creeps, the Negro shuffles, the dog scampers, the cat glides, the mule ambles. You see, there is a different word for each kind of motion.

It is surprising how different two similar words can be. Someone brings to your desk an advertisement with the title, "How We Got a New House for Our Old Home." You pick up the copy and transpose those two words. Now the title reads, "How We Got a New Home for Our Old House." You have done a very clever thing. You have a true feeling for the meaning of those two words. An old house is something to get rid of—a new home is a cozy, happy place you very much want to own.

How may we know when a word is good to use? There are three ways of finding it out: First, is it used in our



• "—AND HEARTILY DID HE SMITE HIM FOR IT"

own time? Some words get out of date. They are the words great-grandfather used. It would sound funny, wouldn't it, if your friend said to you, "I hear thy Sire was kicked by his steed yesternoon." And equally funny if you replied, "Yea, and heartily did he smite him for it."

Next, is the word used nationally? Every locality has words peculiar to itself, but they are not good words to use in writing, because if you use them, some of your readers will not know the meaning. Down South a gallery is what we call, in the Central States, a porch. A merry-go-round, in the South, is called "flying horses." Such an expression would be all right in certain parts of the South, but not at all intelligible to folks in the East, West, or North.

The third test for a word is whether or not it is used by good writers. Slang is dangerous. As a rule, it is only an attempt of the letter writer to be clever, and to cover up the smallness of his vocabulary. He can't think of the right word to use to express his meaning, so he grabs a slang phrase that just about fits.

You should write "down" rather than "up." Any letter that you write should be perfectly intelligible, or easily understood, by a twelve-year-old boy. I read a story somewhere about the late Arthur Brisbane, the great journalist, which illustrates the point. One of his staff handed him an editorial and instead of reading it, Brisbane called his office boy. "Boy," he said, "read this editorial." The boy plowed through the copy, then started to read it again. "It won't do," said Brisbane. "If an editorial can't be easily understood by this boy the first time he reads it, it will not be understood by the general public. Write it over."

I suppose you have heard the famous expression of Pascal. Remember? He said, "I didn't have time to write you a short letter, so I wrote a long one." That's something to think about. A few words well planted are better than a bushel of words thrown to the wind. Take the short cuts. Don't be a babbling brook that runs on forever. Know what you want to say. Say it. Stop.

Short, Anglo-Saxon words are always the best. This is a fact known to the best writers of all times. In the Gettysburg Address, there are one hundred and ninety-four words of one syllable, fifty-two words of two syllables, and only twenty-one that have more than two. Yet this little speech is known to be one of the finest pieces of writing in the English language.

Lincoln knew the power of the short word, and so did Shakespeare. Consider this passage from *King Lear*:

Lear: And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!  
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,  
And thou no breath at all? Thou 'lt come no  
more,  
Never, never, never, never, never!  
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.  
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,  
Look there, look there!

Edg: He faints! My lord, my lord!

Kent: Break, heart; I prithee, break!

\* Edg: Look up, my lord.

Kent: Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him  
much  
That would upon the rack of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer.

The power of words could be no greater—and yet how many do you find in those lines that have more than even one syllable? The power of simplicity—learn to use it.

Why are the short words the best? Because we are mostly Anglo-Saxon by inheritance. Ninety-seven per cent of the King James' translation of the Bible is Anglo-Saxon. The human race probably started in Persia. Certain tribes migrated to northern Europe and others to the south. Life in the north was bitter and rugged. Life in the south was artificial and luxurious. Words of the northern people were typical of the life they led—short, terse, rugged. The words in the south became pompous, oratorical, flowery.

Now, we Americans are mostly descendants of the northern people. It is a part of our blood and being to understand best and appreciate most the short, terse words of the northern European people. Words of Latin and Greek origin are all right for literary essays—for the scholar. But they are not the language of the everyday, ordinary American.

I am thinking of two letters, both mailed by large business houses in an effort to get new business. The first letter was mailed to five thousand people, and did not get a single new customer. Only fifty-eight per cent of the words in this letter were of Anglo-Saxon origin. The second letter brought a half-million dollars worth of business to the company that sent it out. This letter was ninety-four per cent Anglo-Saxon. There you have it. The first letter was artificial and did not get under the skin of the reader. The other was simple, natural, persuasive, and brought home the bacon.

Here is the opening paragraph of a letter that I have in my museum. There are plenty of big words in it; but tell

me, if you can, after one reading, what the writer was trying to say.

From conversations with our clients in diversified lines of business, we have assimilated the impression that buying has reduced inventories to the point that their replacement cannot long be deferred, and that the enhancement of grain accumulations has corrected conditions in territories of the commonwealth where for an extensive period buying power has been greatly restricted, and the restoration of which is about to be reflected in the acceleration of trade activity.

And here's another of the same breed:

Your esteemed communication expressing the anticipation that we are in the fortunate position to render instantaneous delivery of the pending accumulation of goods stored for your highly favored account has had our immediate consideration and it is our pleasure to supply the information that our shipping department is desirous of complying with your request and promises to initiate shipment in the near future.

Fiddlesticks! Did you ever see such a sour-mix of words before? Is that good letter writing? Of course not. Long words—a long sentence—what a mess!

Instead of—

participate,	why not say	share
abundance,	" " "	lot
approximate,	" " "	about
conclusion,	" " "	end
assistance,	" " "	help
correspond,	" " "	write
endeavor,	" " "	try
frequently,	" " "	often
necessitate,	" " "	force
remunerate,	" " "	pay
difficult,	" " "	hard

The other day I got a letter from a man who wanted a job. I wish him the best of luck, but I couldn't help laughing at the words he used to make "the big imprint." Here's your chance to laugh too.

DEAR MR. FRAILEY:

I am taking this opportunity in writing you in behalf of employment. It is deplorable to be writing this letter but it is indispensable.

I will state briefly my past experience as a clerk in a grocery store for four years—my only position since I finished high school. It is obvious you are familiar with these adversity times, and no doubt your ultimate objective is to obtain the most diligent, literate, and comprehensible sort of employees.

It is not my pretension to be a preceptor or pedagogue, but I feel justified to state I could surpass some of the non-productive employees in any of our industrial houses.

Trusting you will give me the opportunity to prove to your satisfaction my ability, and thanking you in advance for any diligent effort made in my behalf,

Yours very truly,

Well, what do you think? Did you ever see a better collection of word monsters under one small tent? Pity, isn't it? He knows a lot of words but not *when* to use them.

Now, it is not only the use of short, Anglo-Saxon words that adds the punch to the business letter, but it is also the *number* of those words. The most effective style for any letter writer is the one that gets results with the least pos-

sible effort. The fewer the words the better—if they do the job.

Study two athletes. Both have muscles to burn. One is a star, the other an ordinary player. Why? Because the star knows how to *conserve* his energy. He wastes nothing. Watch him. His motions are a thing of beauty—he is so graceful and so precise. The dub golfer wades into the ball like a mad bull, and it goes one hundred and seventy-five yards. The star, with an easy, almost lazy, swing, drives the ball a hundred yards farther. It's the same with words. Don't press. If words were pennies, how many would you save?

Sometimes I am asked how long a good letter should be. Well, that's a foolish question. Lincoln was asked one time how long a man's legs should be. Do you know what he said? "Long enough to reach the ground!" All right! The same is true of a letter. Make it long enough to do the job—no longer. If it takes more than one page—can't be done on one—fine. Make it two—or three—or four. Do the job. But do it as simply as you can.

From a businessman in Wisconsin came recently the copy of a letter that he had just received from a lawyer in his community. Now you would think a lawyer would know how to use words sparingly. You wouldn't expect him to ramble around, saying the same thing over and over. But here's what he said, word for word:

I sincerely regret to advise that I do not feel I am in just the position at the present time to make you the report as to the enclosed, for certain reasons. However, it may be at some future time I may be in the position to make such a report, and as aforesaid, I regret indeed just at the present time I really do not feel in the position to give you the requested information

for certain reasons, that I would prefer not to state, just at the present time.

Hard to believe, isn't it? How could any man be smart enough to pass the bar examination, and write such drivel?

Here are some sentences. The words in *italics* are unnecessary. Why should they be there?

It has been canceled *on our books*.

*Our hearty thanks are extended* for your order.

What do you think, *in your estimation*, is needed?

It is a red *colored* flower.

I will do it *at a* later date.

The only way the letter writer can improve in the use of words is by becoming "word conscious." You may remember the story of the little girl and her grandfather's beard. One day she said to him, "Grandpa, what do you do with your beard at night? Do you sleep with it on top of the cover, or under the cover, or do you tuck it into your nightshirt?" Well, the old fellow couldn't answer—he had never worried about his beard at night. So he went off to bed, and he tried his beard on top of the cover, under the cover, and inside his nightshirt. Poor old grandfather! He couldn't go to sleep. All night long he tossed in his bed, trying to get that beard where it best belonged. It had never bothered him before, but his granddaughter's question had him *beard conscious!*

All right! That's what you need. You must become *word conscious*. You must form the habit of examining your own letters, of noticing how other folks write. You must *think* your way to better writing.

Words—words—words! Devils to plague you, or angels to help you—which will it be?



"GRANDPA, WHAT DO YOU DO WITH  
YOUR BEARD AT NIGHT?"

## 3

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*Fine Feathers Make Fine Birds*

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THE FIRST IMPRESSION IS ALWAYS IMPORTANT. YOU GO to hear a lecture by a man you have not seen before. He takes the platform, and before a word has been said, thought waves about him have formed in your mind. If your first impression of him was a poor one, he may still overcome your antagonism by the merit of his speech, but he surely starts with the odds against him. We say that certain people have pleasing personalities. We like some at first sight. We like some letters in the same way.

You should be sure that the appearance of your letter is good. This is a mechanical thing—so easy to accomplish. You wear the best clothes your purse will permit. Why not be just as careful about the paper on which your letters are written? Surely it is penny wise and pound foolish to cheapen your letter by using inferior paper. The average letter, counting dictation time, typing, and postage, costs between thirty and forty cents. A fraction of a penny is the only difference between cheap paper and the best. The best in the long run is sure to be the cheapest.

Now here is where some people are going to be misled by what I have said. They will think I am preaching the

bizarre—they will go to the extreme. Far from it. Stay in the middle of the road. It is a good rule for living, or for letters. My own stationery is unusual—a letter man can get attention that way—but I think it has a certain dignity. Good taste in the selection of your stationery is just as important as in the choosing of your shirt.

The paper on which you write should never be loud or effeminate. The other day I got an application for employment that prejudiced me against the writer before I had read a line of his letter. The paper was lavender and it bore all the sweet perfumes of Arabia. Probably the young man had borrowed a sheet of his sister's paper—but it was poor judgment on his part.

Your letterhead counts just as much as the paper. Here again it is possible to save a penny and fail to please a customer. The design should be made by a good artist. The printing should be first-class. It may cost you a few dollars more to start out with good-looking, dignified letterheads, but you will soon get these dollars back. The good impression eventually means more business.

I think the *block* style of typing makes the best appearance. The lines of each paragraph are single-spaced. There are no indentations, but between paragraphs there is one extra space. Occasionally, to get attention, letters are typed in unusual ways. But I don't like them.

On the other hand—and here you will perhaps call me inconsistent—I have gone "radical" in setting up the form in which my own letters are typed. The first time I write to a man I place the name of his company and his address at the top of the letter. This is only for recording purposes. From that time on I begin all letters to him, "Dear Mr. Jones." More than that, I have omitted the complimentary close. What good does it do? Why say "Yours

very truly" or "Sincerely yours"? This custom is only a throwback to conventional days. It is as obsolete and unnecessary as the rubber-stamp talking we discussed in the first chapter. At least, that is my opinion. You do not need to agree.

At least, your name should always be *typed* at the bottom of your letter. That may save your reader a lot of trouble in trying to decipher your signature. Tell your secretary to space four times after the last sentence—then type your name. Write your signature above it.

If you don't think that's the right thing to do, suppose you look at a few names I have taken from a folder in my files—it is labeled "Cock-eyed Signatures."

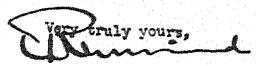
Suppose you had never had a letter before from one of these folks, and you wanted to reply. How would you spell out his name to your secretary?

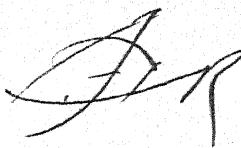
Well, all of these things may sound commonplace—but they are important. You would not send out after orders a salesman who shaved once a week and changed his collar by the same schedule. Why, then, send out a letter that makes the same sloppy impression?

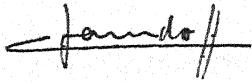
The laws governing position, spacing, and so on are flexible. You may like paragraphs indented, but I don't. And what's the difference? If our preference reflects good taste, that's all that matters. But my idea of a model business letter is the one on page 31.

Now remember, that's just the style that looks best to me when it comes to dressing a business letter. But styles vary according to the individual. Time determines which customs shall endure and which shall perish. It's what you say in your letter that counts most. It would be foolish to quarrel over such mechanics as indentation, abbreviation, and so on.

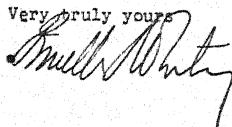
  
Purchasing Agent

  
Very truly yours,  
Dennis

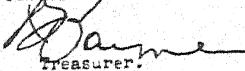
  
DR

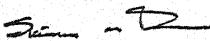
  
James

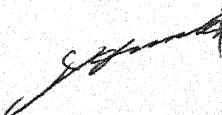
  
W. F. S.

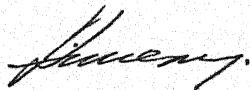
  
Very truly yours  
Mull White

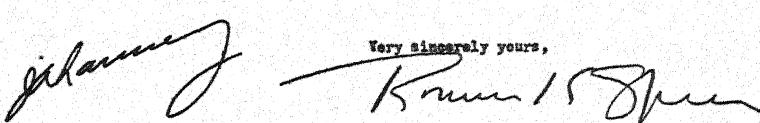
PRINTING COMPANY

  
B. Barnes  
Treasurer.

  
J. D. Smith

  
J. D. Smith

  
J. D. Smith

  
John H. Green  
Very sincerely yours,  
John H. Green

"COCK-EYED SIGNATURES"

Certainly, as I have tried to emphasize so often, the trend in both copy and physical set-up is toward simplicity. We are marching along, but the end of the road is still ahead. Human beings hate to give up old conventions. The man who steps out of the beaten path is first ridiculed and abused, but if his idea is good, eventually the multitude follows him. Had it not been for those who dared to be different, the human race would still be living in swamp and jungle. And this is also true of business letters!

From my model letter on the page following, you will see that the date line and the lines in the inside address close with periods and commas. Ask me why, and I can only answer that they look best that way to me. I know that these punctuation marks have been discarded by many companies. Well, that's okeh. Use the form you like best.

Again, you will notice that I do not care for abbreviations. Such words as President, Company, Indiana, and so on, I like to see spelled out. Surely, if you are on the other side of the fence—if you believe in abbreviating when possible—then you should *stay* on that side. Be consistent. Don't abbreviate in one place and not in another.

The initials of the typist are probably necessary, although I don't remember in twenty years that I have ever looked at the carbon of a letter to see who wrote it. But why have the initials of the man who dictates? You know the usual form—LEF/MLF. The full name of the writer is typed below the space for his signature. Is there any excuse for repeating his initials along with those of his secretary? No, none at all.

Some writers are experimenting with forms that are extreme departures from the usual run. They start the first line of each paragraph even with the margin, and in-

DAWSON IMPLEMENT COMPANY  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

February 20, 19\_\_\_\_.

Mr. W. K. Ward, President,  
Ward Hardware Company,  
Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dear Mr. Ward:

Now and then, we like to contact our friends with no other motive except to give a word of greeting, and to tell them how much they mean to our business. And could there be a better time to do this than on the birthday of our first president, George Washington?

In spite of all the stories which have been told about him that the historians now say are not true - like the one about the cherry tree - the fact remains beyond question that this man was heart and soul for his fellowmen. The service which he rendered our republic, and his reputation for honest dealing have placed him on a pedestal which will forever endure.

Reputation!

In these days of mugwumping, vote grabbing, chiseling, and insincerity - too often characteristic of political leaders - it is an inspiration to think of George Washington, and that all these years his reputation has stood unsullied.

Is there after all any more priceless asset to man or business than the building of a reputation for unselfish service? We don't think so, and you don't either. There may be quicker ways to make money, ways to hedge and cheat, but we want none of them. We must meet you, day by day, with the reputation for honest dealing, and dependable products.

It has been good to trade with you these past years - good to know you. We hope that together we may go along blessed with the reputation for fair play and absolute dependability.

mlf

Clyde Dawson, President,  
DAWSON IMPLEMENT COMPANY.

dent the other lines. They use "ditty dots" profusely. Do I like such schemes? Well, no—because they are not steps toward simplicity. They are reforms in the wrong direction.

Sometimes I am asked, "Why should we start our letters with *Dear Mr. Jones?*" They say that the "Dear" is just another hang-over from bygone days—that it means nothing. That's true. But so are neckties unnecessary. I'll stop wearing them, and stop using the "Dear" if the rest of you will. But I don't want to be conspicuous. And neither do you!

But this is only half the story. Fine paper and a good letterhead can be ruined by a poor stenographer. The expert may cost you five dollars more a week, but she, too, is worth the difference. The good typist knows how to balance her letter on the page, her touch is even, the margins are straight, and she seldom needs to erase. A businessman has much to say about the kind of work his secretary turns out. If he is satisfied with sloppy letters, he is sure to get them. The letters my own secretary gives me are perfectly done. Maybe at first she thought I was cranky, but I think now that she is grateful. I have helped to make her the perfect secretary by insisting that she keep the standard high. You are not playing fair—with yourself, or with the one who does your work—if you accept anything but the best. You both lose.

Poor grammar, misspelled words, and incorrect sentences are just as dangerous as cheap stationery and poor typing. The man who wrote, "What did you send me that book to be read out of from for?" was sure to lose caste with the average reader. So was the fellow who wrote, "This will make introduced to you Mrs. Marybelle Higgens—18 years old and married." In this little book, I take it for granted

that you have mastered the fundamentals of good grammar. You will never be able to turn out satisfactory letters unless or until you have.

Here is a short letter I once got from a college graduate. Now don't think I hold anything against the colleges. I was once fully exposed to a good university. But you do wonder how this fellow got his degree with an ability to use language about equal to that of the average fourth-grade student.

DEAR SIR:

I am graduated from college this spring and am now looking for work with possibilities of promotion in the future.

While during school, I was majored in Economics and Business Administration.

If there are any opening in your system will you be pleased to let me know.

Yours Respectively,

Another hopeful young man looking for work tells me that he "kept books" and wrote collection letters for another company. Well, bless his heart, before writing any more letters, he should get out the old grade-school grammar and start digging.

For the ignorant fellow who just doesn't know any better, I have sincere sympathy. The opportunity does not come to all to get an education, and it is hardly fair to make fun of the handicapped writer. But here is a letter that I can't resist giving you. You will laugh at the lady postmaster whose nose would not behave.

DEAR MR. RALSTON PURINA:

I ask if you have letter from me and there was 25 cents postal stamps and them two slips for your bowl and you not send me that bowl back.

I write you now if you are going to send anything that you do not put the name on it who it comes from because at the post office the girl they call postmaster sticks her nose everywhere and if you please are going to send that bowl send it some way so she cannot open it till I get it myself.

And I let you know I am 16 years at this place and I know everybody knows me just like kids know their father. There Mister I send you 3c stamp so you can send me letter back.

Yours truley,

Speaking of letters to tickle your funny bone, I'll show you a couple more. They haven't much to do with the subject of this chapter, but it will do you no harm to pause and laugh a bit.

Both were from men who had not paid their bills. At least, they write to the point.

DEAR MEESTER:

I got your letter about what I owes you. Now you be pachent. If this wuz judgement day and you wuz no more prepared to meet your Master as I am to meet your bill, you would sure have to go to Hell. Trusting you will do this, I am,

\* \* \* \* \*

GENTS:

In regard to the above, I wish to state that I pay my bills once a month, but most of the time I don't have

enough money to go around. So to be fair to everybody, I put all the bills in a basket, shake 'em up, and close my eyes. Then I draw one bill at a time out of the basket, as long as I have any money left in the bank. That's fair, isn't it?

Now, sirs, if you send me any more of your sarcastic collection letters, I won't even put your bills in the basket.

While talking about the fundamentals of good language, three old-time friends step forth. They are Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis. Perhaps you have forgotten them. Nevertheless, they have their place in the sun, and unless you stick to the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis, you are not likely to get good results.

Building a letter is like building a brick wall. First you select the bricks—all alike. You decide what color they shall be, and what size. You do the same in your letter—you select facts that contribute to one purpose. You have clearly in mind the exact thought you want to express. You stick to it. No matter how clever other ideas may be, they must not be allowed to creep into your letter. They will only detract from the one dominant idea you are trying to put into the reader's mind.

Having selected the bricks for the wall, you think next of the cement that will hold them together. Well, you need cement in your letter, too. You must have the little connecting links—words that bind sentences to each other and lead the reader, without break of thought, to his final destination.

Just to give your wall a bit of variety—to make it more interesting in appearance—you decide to add a stone cap, or to use a different design at certain places. Thus you

gain emphasis. The same principle applies to letter writing. You emphasize certain facts in your letter by the position in which they are placed, or sometimes, by careful repetition of the same idea, you drive it home in your reader's mind.

Of these three essentials, the greatest perhaps is unity. So many letters are filled to the brim with scatter-brain talk. They leave you lost in the woods—you cannot find the way out. They remind me of the country boy who, for the first time, went to the county fair.

All winter he had been saving his pennies—he had just one dollar to spend. Hand in hand with his old aunt, he went through the gate, trembling with excitement. The first attraction was the merry-go-round. He couldn't resist it. While his aunt waited patiently he took a ride—then another and another. He couldn't stand the thought of getting off as long as his money lasted. Finally—poor kid—the dollar was gone. His face glowing, he rushed over to his aunt and cried, "Gee, Gosh, Auntie, wasn't that fun—wasn't that fun?"

The old lady smiled at the boy. "Yes, Sonny," she said, "I reckon it must have been fun. You've been around and around and around—but *where have you been?*"

Do you see what I mean? A lot of letter writers are like that country kid—as long as they have words to spend, around and around and around they go. You finish reading their letters, and *where have you been?* They take you for a long and sometimes exciting ride—they jump from tiger to elephant to kangaroo—but you end up exactly where you began. They haven't the slightest conception of unity—they do not seem to know them-



AROUND AND AROUND AND AROUND

selves what they are trying to say—they don't care. They are driven by a frenzy of words, words, words.

"Why do you want to divorce this woman?" asked the judge. "Why, lawdy, because she talks too much." "She talks too much; what does she say?" "Well, judge, she don't say."

You take the reader by the hand—you who give no thought to unity—and hopefully he goes along with you. But you can't stick to the road. You stop to pick daisies. You wander here and there. Finally, you go alone. The reader is busy—he has lost interest in the journey.

Here is a fine example of daisy picking. Notice, too, the queer little sentence at the end.

GENTLEMEN:

Am enclosing the tag from a box of your wafers, and will relate to you a little incident.

While reading a little story "Baked in a Pie" and having nearly finished my box of wafers, the story begins. It is a tale of the Revolution, and when our patriot, James Madison, was presented with a pie. He eyed the pastry lovingly, inwardly praying that his hunger might not get the better of him and that he would be able to eat it like a Virginian, and on finishing, nothing remained but an empty plate.

He was very sensible as he wiped the crumbs from his mouth and looked for his hat. It is hard to reason on an empty stomach but the gentleman of Virginia was no longer hungry. According to the little song, "Sing a song of six-pence, pockets full of rye, four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie; when the pie was opened the birds began to sing, wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a King?"

My surprise was that the inside wrapper was eaten up by little insects, and they were swarming all over the last two pieces.

Hope you will be kind enough to send me a few samples.

I am in attention of your esteemed answer.

Yours truly,

Why did she write? To complain about the insects or to get some samples? Why did she tell me the story about James Madison? Why the jingle about the black-birds? Around and around and around she went, and to this day I am wondering just what she wanted.

But if that good housewife has made you smile, what about this politician who was making his maiden speech? They tell me these words are actually printed in the *Congressional Record*. I have never looked to see.

Gentlemen, before you take this step into your hands, I want to put my best foot forward. Let us consider a few aspects. For instance for the first aspect, let us take, for example, the War of the Revolution. There was ancient Rome, for example. Let us not only live so that our children who live after us, but that our ancestors who preceded us and fought to make this country what it is! . . . And now, gentlemen, a boy today is a man tomorrow—or rather in a few years. Consider the winning of the far West—Daniel Boone and Kit Carson, and in our own time Buffalo Bill and Jesse James! . . . Finally, in closing I want to tell you about a vision that I seem to see. I seem to see Columbia—Columbia—ah—blindfolded—ah—covered with scales—driving the ship of State over the battlefields of the Republic, into the heart of the Golden West, and among the cotton fields of the Sunny South.

And so, after tumultuous applause, the good fathers voted to adjourn! Unity slaughtered—language defiled! The end of a perfect day!

But enough of such tweedledee-tweedledum writing. Think straight—talk straight. Know your grammar—it is the foundation of all good letters.

Just one thing more—and it also goes back to your boyhood days. You must know how to punctuate. It is surprising how even one little comma can wreck the meaning of a letter. Once a clerk copied a tariff bill. He added one comma. The error was not noticed, and the bill had to stand for an entire year before it could be changed. I am told it cost the United States Government—that error—more than two million dollars.

Here is how it happened. Certain things listed in this bill were to be admitted to the country free of duty. Among them was "All foreign fruit plants." Fruit plants were not to be taxed, but the clerk placed a comma after fruit. In other words, all foreign fruit *and* all foreign plants had to be admitted free that year. An expensive addition—that comma!

Well, I could go on with many other examples of carelessness. A girl once typed effected instead of affected. The boss added his signature. It cost his company ten thousand dollars. But this little book must move along. Strive for a style that is simple and terse. Write to the point, and write correctly. Consider the value of a good appearance. Fine feathers make fine birds.

## *Because It Was Our Course*

COLUMBUS DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TO SAY IN THE LOG OF the Santa Maria, but, time after time, you read this single entry: "This day we sailed westward because it was our course." The crew became mutinous, demanded that he turn back for Spain, but Columbus wouldn't swerve. He kept sailing straight ahead—*because* it was his course.

All right—remember those words of Columbus. Writing a letter is very much like a sea voyage. You chart your course, you get underway, you sail straight, and you make port. When you chart the course you make a plan. When you get underway, you choose an introduction that will arouse interest. When you sail straight, you build fact upon fact until the story is completely and clearly told. When you make port, you add the conclusion that moves the reader to action.

Nothing great was ever done without a plan. You must think your letter through before you begin to write. Great battles are won in the minds of the generals. Once the plan is made, the soldiers advance. Know what you want. Decide how to go after it. Then call out your words and start the attack.

To chart the course of the good letter you are going to write, you must do five things:

1. Determine the purpose.
2. Get all the facts.
3. Visualize the reader.
4. Select the best appeal.
5. Profit by experience.

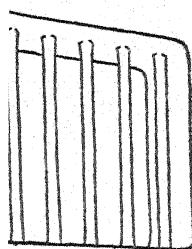
Wang was a Chinaman. His language was not so good—but he knew what he wanted. The *purpose* of his letter is quite clear. "I am Wang," he said. "I drive a typewriter with big noise, and my knowledge of English is great. My last position has left me for the reason that the large boss is dead. It was no fault of mine. If can do, I will call upon you on some date that you should guess."

It is remarkable how much a few words can do—if we know in advance what we want them to do. A young man and a young lady exchanged telegrams. He paid for two hundred words to ask a question. She replied with one. The answer was "Yes." A credit manager once showed me the five letters he used in going after the customer who wouldn't pay his bill. He said that the fourth in the series pulled the best. It consisted of the one word—"Please."

Another good credit letter is attributed to the great man of letters, Elbert Hubbard. "Come, Brother, dig! You'll never know the difference, and God knows we need the money." You would expect that letter of Mr. Hubbard. He had a sense of humor and the ability to make one word do the work of ten.

As much to the point was the letter from the poor devil who had applied for a pardon, and was getting anxious. "Dear Governor," he wrote. "They are fixing to hang

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SATIDY  
~~SUNDAY~~  
~~MUNDAY~~  
TOOSDAY  
WENSDAY  
THURSDAY

"THEY ARE FIXING TO HANG ME ON THURSDAY—"

me on Thursday and here it is Tuesday." He knew his purpose—that fellow. He wanted to save his neck, and he wasted no words.

Another little gem that will make you laugh goes like this: "Dear Sir: Will you please send me the name of a good lawyer in your city—I think I may have to sue you."

I once went to hear a prominent man make a speech. The subject was "How to Write a Good Business Letter." I expected to listen or to doze about an hour, but it was all over in about fifteen seconds. Here is what he said: "The only way to write a good business letter is to know what you want to say—say it—and *stop*." Then he sat down.

Okeh! You know the *purpose* of this letter you are going to write. What comes next? That's right—you must have all the facts. The reader has confidence in the man who *knows*. It is silly to try to bluff him. He is smart enough to see quickly that you are talking through your hat.

But it's often done—this bluffing. Maybe I ought to show you the most colossal Specimen of Spoofing I have ever been able to capture—the famous Chess Letter.

It seems the customer wanted the rules for playing chess. Ever play the game? If not, look no farther. This letter will tell you clearly how it is done. Behold!

DEAR MADAM:

We do not have any special directions printed for playing chess, but I would suggest that you take one chess and move it from the bottom to the center, following the game through to the finer points. The first party that fills in the top of the board wins the game. We assure you, that if you will follow these instructions

carefully, you will be able to play the game to your satisfaction.

Yours very truly,

Do you think I am fooling? Not so. That letter was actually written by a clerk in a large mail-order company. You don't know whether to laugh or to weep. Surely, it is a serious matter when a letter writer does such a sloppy job. This one had never played chess—that's obvious. He didn't know the facts wanted by the customer. It was sheer folly for him to answer without them.

Is anything in business more valuable than time? Surely not. Then it should never be necessary to write two letters about the same thing when one could do the job. If the reader comes back at you—says he does not understand a certain part of your letter—it is usually proof that you either failed to write clearly or did not start with all of the facts at your command. In either case you are guilty—you have been a poor letter craftsman.

Here is another exhibit—almost as queer as the Chess Letter. It was sent by the manager of a big hotel. His face should be red.

DEAR MR. BROWN:

Your favor of the 21st instant has been received, regarding the Dealers' Convention to be held here October 24th to 28th inclusive. Everything has been arranged in accordance with your letter.

Mr. Brown himself arrived yesterday, and states that everything is perfectly satisfactory. Thanking you, we are,

Very truly yours,

Oh, no, there were not two Browns. The manager of that hotel wrote to Mr. Brown that Mr. Brown had arrived yesterday. Not much thinking behind that letter, was there? Can't quite see why it was ever written—can you?

Some people seem to be just too lazy to get the facts. They come right out and admit it. Not so long ago I got a letter from a prominent magazine editor asking why I had not renewed my subscription. And what do you suppose he said at the end? "P. S.: If you *have* renewed, please disregard this letter." Rather than get the one fact needed, he wasted his time and mine with a full-page letter. Beware of the postscript. Almost always it is an afterthought—an evidence of no plan and small thinking.

Facts! Facts! Facts! Resolve to be thorough. In life, or in letter writing, you won't go far by accident. Don't ever try to write a letter without a clear understanding of what the customer wants, and how he can best be served. Get to the bottom of things—in your writing and in everything else you do. It is the only way. Believe me.

But that isn't all. There are two people most concerned in your letter—you and the reader. Or to put it another way, the reader is the audience of a private show in which you are the star performer. You set the stage and speak your lines, all for the reader's appreciation. You must get his attention, *bold* it, and put your lines across. If you fail to do that your "audience" will walk out on you—by dropping your letter in the waste basket.

Try to picture your reader, sitting on the other side of your desk. Ask yourself, "How old is this fellow? What are his politics, his hobbies, his prejudices? What's his religion—what's his goal in life? Is he rich man, poor man, beggar-man, or thief? How should I tell him my

story so that he will be pleased? How can I best serve him?"

Abe Lincoln once said, "When I'm getting ready to reason with a man, I spend one third of my time thinking about myself and what I'm going to say, and two-thirds thinking about him and what he is going to say."

Think, then, in planning your letter, one third of the time about yourself and two thirds about your reader. But that's almost contrary to human nature, isn't it? We are all so inherently selfish. I am—just as much as you! Our opinion counts most. Our point of view comes first. Sometimes we hardly stop to think of the reader at all. The facts are handed out, colored to our liking, and he is expected to swallow them.

But that's all wrong. This man who gets your letter is another human being. He probably is very much like you. Usually he is a decent chap and gets along nicely with his neighbors. But his personality is different from any other personality. The better you get to know him—to understand him—the better you will be able to talk his language, and to win his confidence.

Be sure that he is going to be interested—or should be—in what you say. Don't plant garden seed in a bed of cinders. Millions of dollars are wasted annually by sending sales letters to folks who are not logical prospects. Why send a circular about sixteen-cylinder automobiles to a clerk whose salary is fifteen dollars a week? Or a letter about a new kind of wooden leg to a man who still has two good legs made of flesh and bone?

Once my wife got a letter from a maker of tombstones. It was a very sympathetic letter. Her husband was supposed to have died, but as you can see, the supposition was somewhat exaggerated.

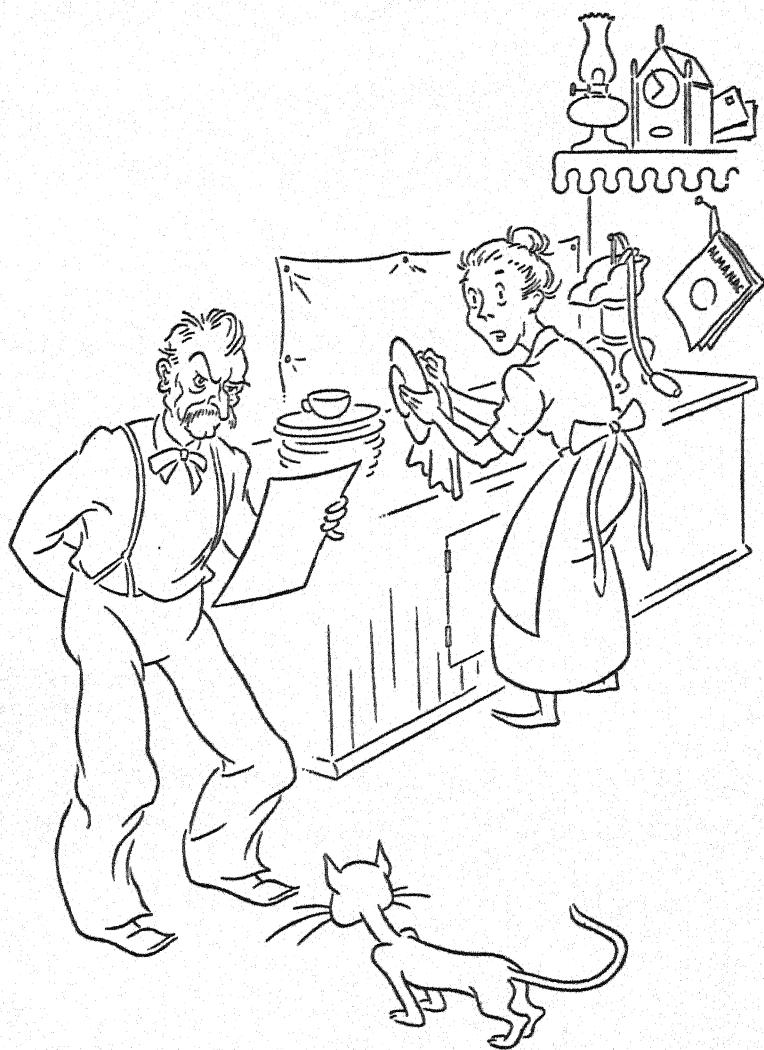
But there is always a soft spot in every human being. It is the place where you must thrust home. There is something that will appeal to every reader. Your problem is to find it.

We are all created with certain instincts—there are things we like and things we don't. Study the advertisements in any magazine and you will find that they appeal, if they are good ones, to certain basic instincts—hunger, pride, love, fear, sociability, ambition, or any one of the many others. You can follow no better plan in the writing of your letters.

But one thing always remember! Positive pictures are better than negative. Appeal to hope, not fear; to desire, not dread; to prosperity, not panic; to love, not hate.

Be concrete—avoid generalities. You might say, for example, "Florida, with its warm sun, rich soil, and golden opportunities, is a good place to visit." But the adjectives are not specific—they do not leave a vivid picture in the reader's mind. How different the result when you write, "Get out of the snow and sleet—come to Florida where men are playing golf in their shirt sleeves, and pickaninnies are eating watermelons bigger than themselves." There you have a picture that excites the reader—shirt sleeves and watermelons—he wants to take the next train to Florida.

If you do not believe there is a soft spot in almost any man, listen to the story of the hard-boiled merchant in Texas who would never buy a cash register. The old-time money drawer under the counter was good enough for him. Innumerable salesmen failed to change his mind. The sales manager of one company tried his hand and lost. He went back to his office and wrote that merchant a different letter every week—it became a game to find the



"MA, I AM GOING TO BUY ONE OF THEM  
NEWFANGLED CASH REGISTERS"

right appeal. But the old fellow stood like the Rock of Gibraltar. The harder they tried, the more stubborn he became.

But a letter came along one day which began: "If some man should make your boy a thief—feeling as you do about your boy—why do you leave that open, unprotected cash drawer in front of your clerks—other men's boys? They know you have no check on your cash, and if one of them steals, who is to blame?"

The Texan read the letter at home. He snorted, and threw it on the floor. A half hour later he picked it up, and read it again. Finally, he said to his wife, "Ma, I am going to buy one of them newfangled cash registers."

And the woman answered, "But, John, you've always said you wouldn't—don't they cost a heap of money?"

"I reckon they do," the merchant replied, "but I must buy one. I don't want my boy to be a thief, and I don't want to make any other man's boy a thief. Get me the pen and ink. I want to write to the people that wrote me this letter."

There you have it. Through the man's love for his boy, the cash register was sold. It pays to vary the attack. If a right to the jaw doesn't work, give him a left to the stomach. If that fails, go into a clinch and pound the kidneys. Eventually, you will strike the right appeal. Keep trying.

Mother may not give a hang for what interests father. Grandpa's thoughts are not at all like his grandson's. One of the large companies, selling water heaters, recognized these differences. Watch how they baited the hook to suit the fish they were after. Here's how the different letters began:

*To Father:* Are you like Mr. Fuller in that you dislike to shave with cold water? Mr. Fuller usually grumbled when the water was cold. You know how the ordinary hot water system works early in the morning.

*To Mother:* If there is any one member of the family that appreciates the convenience, the luxury, of having hot water in the house on an instant's notice, it is you. There is scarcely an hour of the day that you don't have a need for hot water in some part of the house.

*To Daughter:* Miss Marjorie Fuller used to declare: "I'm ashamed to have guests come for the week-end. There's never enough hot water in the house." Probably you have had the same complaint.

*To Son:* I'll bet you're like a lot of other aggressive, up-and-doing chaps. You do believe in making the most of minutes. It peeves you to have to wait for hot water for the morning shave.

Well, there is nothing remarkable about those introductions, but they do show an attempt to plan the blow to fit the opponent. Now notice how an insurance company went after the lady school-teachers in three different letters—each time using a different appeal—always searching for the soft spot.

There's a little story of Joseph Conrad that every school-teacher will appreciate. When Conrad was a boy, he sat gazing at a map of the world. Suddenly, thrusting a grimy finger upon a distant, colorful spot, the youngster exclaimed, "Some day I'm going there." I wonder if there is a school-teacher in the world who hasn't said those very words! (Appeal to desire for travel.)



A dear old teacher I used to know once confided to me her fondest dream—to end her days in a cozy little cottage just over the hill from the schoolhouse, where she could hear the ding-dong of the schoolbell—and never have to answer it at all. (Appeal to desire to get away from the monotony of teaching.)

\* \* \* \* \*

In that last quarter of an hour, after the scholars have gone home, and you are alone in the schoolroom, setting your desk to rights—don't you sometimes wonder what the future holds for you? Things are running rather smoothly now. But what about the declining years of your life? (Appeal to fear of poverty in old age.)

Do you get the idea? Study your reader. If it is a form letter going to a class of people, try to imagine the average person of that class. Think of the things that the average person might like—select your appeal to match those cravings.

Beware of profanity. Beware of religious criticism. People get all red-hot about religion or politics. Be careful. You may be probing an open wound. Why take the chance?

Last, but certainly not the least important, when planning your letter, profit by experience. You have succeeded with certain letters; you have failed with others. Why?

"This day we sailed westward because it was our course." You, too, must chart your course—must sweat blood to be sure it is right. But having chosen, stick to it. Let not all the king's horses and all the king's men swerve you one inch from the way you have determined to go.

## 5

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*Up with the Anchor and Swiftly Away*

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YOU HAVE CHARTED THE COURSE—NOW IT IS TIME TO set sail. How can you arouse interest? How can you get the attention of your reader? It's the sink or swim part of your letter—that first paragraph or two. There can be no second shot. Either you take your reader by the hand and lead him through to the end or he runs away to something more interesting. When he runs away you are done. He never comes back. Your letter has failed.

Begin *quickly*. Nine times out of ten the horse that first jumps the barrier is the one that wins the race. No time to lose. No words to waste. The best defense is a rushing offense. Jack Dempsey knew that. You must know it too. The first paragraph overcomes inertia—it is to your letter what the self-starter is to your car. Don't fall back on the crank. Step on the gas and strive for a quick get-away.

Here it is necessary, I suppose, to hang a red lantern. Make the beginning interesting, but don't try to *trick* your reader into giving attention. The first paragraph must be a logical part of the whole letter. You can't get the reader's interest and then leave him dangling in the air.

He will resent that. People don't like to dangle. They don't like to be hoodwinked by irrelevant nonsense. If you use a story, be sure that the point of that story is the point of the letter.

Just getting attention is not enough. Any fool joke or startling statement will do that. Some letter writers begin like a patent medicine spieler. You know, the kind who stands in front of the sideshow and drums up the crowd. The snake charmer charms—the Honolulu dancer honolulu—and then the spieler begins to spiel. Then you are invited to go into the tent—but most of you pass it by.

Such methods antagonize your reader. You have insulted his intelligence with your monkey business. He says, "This fellow thinks I am a child that has to be amused—he can go to Hell."

P. T. Barnum had the right system. First he got things worth attention. *Then* he got attention.

And that reminds me of a fellow who once applied to me for a position. I can't say that his methods would please the average businessman, but I certainly can testify that he knew how to give himself a preliminary build-up. He knew how to get my attention.

On a Monday morning I got a postal card from this chap. On it he wrote, "Here is one reason why you should give me a position with your company." I have forgotten what the reason was, but it was a good one. And then the card was signed, "The Man with the Big Nose."

Well, I chucked that card in the waste basket. But on Tuesday there came another one, giving me a second reason why he should have the position. On Wednesday, still another. Each was signed, "The Man with the Big Nose."

Thursday the card was a little different. It said, "Now I have given you three good reasons why I would make a fine worker in your company, so tomorrow (Friday) morning I'll be in at nine o'clock to see you." And again the card was signed, "The Man with the Big Nose."

Well, by that time the news had wandered around the office. There were seven hundred of us, and we were all "big nose" conscious. You can imagine what happened from eight until nine on Friday morning. Nobody did any work. We were all looking for big noses.

You'll have to give that fellow some credit anyway. He surely had us all on the lookout for him. He was an attention-getter de luxe.

There are many kinds of opening paragraphs. I cannot give you any one sure-fire way to get off in an interesting way. You cannot write a letter as you roast a goose. Some introductions tell a story—we all like good stories. Some ask a question. There is something about a question that makes us sit up and take notice. Don't you remember, in the school days a long time ago, how you woke up when the teacher popped a question at you?

People are also always interested in startling news—something they didn't know before. Many good letters begin in a "believe it or not" style. They begin with the statement of a strange fact. It isn't a bad method *provided* the information given has something to do with the rest of the letter.

The use of "big names" is also good. We all are prone to hero-worship. We like to know what Roosevelt did, what Mussolini said, what Gandhi believes. The mere repetition of their names causes us to open wide our ears. So does a clever quotation, a smart verse, or an interesting testimonial.

The late Dr. Dignan, letter man of Chicago, called the beginning of the letter the Star. Every letter, he said, should consist of the Star, the Chain, and the Hook. The Star gets attention, the Chain explains the proposition, the Hook compels action. It's an interesting figure of speech. Remember it.

But some of the stars I see seem to have come from the Milky Way. They do not shine. They are dull and deadly. In the first chapter of this little book, I hammered against the use of rubber-stamp language. It is so humdrum. It *kills* interest. And yet you so often see letters beginning with the old-time bromides. They begin like this:

Referring to your inquiry of the 17th instant . . .  
Complying with your request, we send you herewith . . .  
Responding to your valued letter of recent date . . .  
We have your letter of August 21st at hand . . .  
In response to your kind favor, we would say . . .

Shades of the late-lamented past! How can you expect to arouse interest in the mind of a human being by such moth-eaten beginnings? Avoid them like poison. They are fatal. There is no cure.

Begin with confidence. If you haven't the faith, how can you expect your reader to have it? "I sure do not expect to be successful in securing a sales position with your company"—what a spineless start for an application letter. Crucified by his own hand! If he didn't expect it, neither did I. He kicked a hole in his own canoe.

Well, here are a few samples of the story beginning. See if they arouse your interest. I think you will want to read some more of these letters. But you tell me.

The enclosed rubber check has a story behind it. It reminds me of the farmer who, when feed was scarce, fed his horse some sawdust with the hay. Each day he increased the sawdust and cut down the hay. Soon the diet was *all* sawdust. It was all very fine—the farmer saved money—until the horse died.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I shall marry a beautiful woman; I shall be one of the wealthiest men in the land; I shall lead the army of my colony; I shall rule the nation which I help to create."

Do you know who wrote that?

George Washington wrote it in a letter, when he was only twelve years old.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is Sing, the fish dealer, crazy?" an American asked a Chinese friend when he first saw Sing go about in broad daylight carrying a lighted lantern.

"No, that is only the custom," was the reply. "It simply means he has not been able to pay his debts. Chinese New Year began a week ago, but he may exchange no New Year's greetings until he has settled his accounts, and he must carry the lantern until he has done so."

\* \* \* \* \*

Two frogs found themselves in a can of cream. Both struggled to get out. Soon one gave up, thinking the odds were too great. The other said he would keep on agitatin'. The end of the journey found one frog dead at the bottom of the can, and the other sitting on a pat of butter.

All right. Probably you think those are three interesting stories. I did. But that wasn't all. The point of each

story was directly related to the subject of the letter that followed. The theme of the first letter was that in the long run inferior quality does not pay. The second letter was from a bank showing how thrift makes dreams come true. The third, of course, was out to collect money. The fourth was a letter to salesmen, pointing out that when the going is tough, the Lord helps those that help themselves.

Here are three starters in question form. Do they make you take notice? I think they do.

Did it ever occur to you that if you were to start with one cent, and double your money each day for 30 days, you would have more than five million dollars?

\* \* \* \* \*

If your son were to come home with a broken arm, would you know what to do? Suppose he were hit by an automobile, or his clothes caught on fire, or he got broken glass in his eye, what would you do?

\* \* \* \* \*

If you should put 864 dollars in a bank every day, and if every night when that bank closed, the President of that bank would put your money in his pocket—what would you think?

Well, you wouldn't believe me. You got a pencil and did some figuring to prove that first question was all wrong. I know you did—because so did I. But it was true. One cent in thirty days does become more than five million dollars. But the question got our attention or we wouldn't have done the figuring.

We all like Mark Twain. The old rascal got our interest when we were boys, and it has never lagged. So, of course, we will be interested in a story that starts with his name.



—AND FORGETS THE COLLAR

Mark Twain once observed that when a man goes out to buy a collar, he comes back with a collar and maybe a tie he didn't mean to buy, but when he sends his wife, *she* comes back with a bottle of face lotion, four yards of dress goods, some silk stockings, linoleum for the kitchen floor—and forgets the collar.

"One oyster cracker," say the scientists, "or one half of one salted peanut, will supply enough energy for an hour's thinking." There's a startling statement with which one writer got my attention. Another writer tells me, "When you smile, you use 13 muscles—when you frown you use 64." That's interesting—especially to me—I always did believe in smiling all I could. Now, maybe I will live longer—I've been saving muscular energy.

Verses are sometimes good—sometimes awful. Here are samples of each variety:

To those who talk and talk and talk,  
This proverb should appeal:  
The steam that blows the whistle  
Will never turn the wheel.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a young bride in Spain,  
Who was fiercely loved on a train,  
Not once, but again  
And again and again  
And again and again and again.

That second one—if you call it a verse—got my attention all right, but the things I said about the use of it could never be repeated in this book. Not only is it a very silly verse, but there wasn't the slightest connection between it and the rest of the letter. The interest became irritation. It was a sorry choice.

There is another type of beginning that is hard to describe. It is highly personal—somewhat emotional. I suppose the newspaper man would say it has "human interest." It never fails to get my attention. Let's see how it strikes you.

In May, 1927, a great prize fight was staged in New York. Into the ring stepped the announcer. Waving his hand for silence, he said to the surging mass:

"I don't know what you believe in, but Slim Lindbergh is up in the air tonight somewhere between here and Paris. I know you all want to see him come through safely, so I am asking you to help him in the only way you can. Let's stand up for one minute of prayer for him."

\* \* \* \* \*

For twenty years I was an exile. Shunned by people on every hand. Unwanted in the business world. Impossible socially. A mental and physical wreck. A failure at everything I undertook. Despondent, almost devoid of hope. Life to me was a burden—and then I learned to talk.

\* \* \* \* \*

Twenty-eight years ago in a downtown office in Chicago a delivery man placed on a desk a new typewriter—and five minutes later a girl was rattling off the first letter on number 120816.

You say, "What of it?"

Well, just this. The letter you are reading now was typed on that same machine.

\* \* \* \* \*

There's no use trying. I've tried and tried to tell people about my fish. But I wasn't rigged out to be a

letter writer, and I can't do it. I can close-haul a sail with the best of them. I know how to pick out the best fish of the catch, but I'll never learn the knack of writing a letter that will tell people why my kind of fish—right off the fishing boats with the deep-sea tang still in it—is lots better than the ordinary store kind.

There's something uncanny about that fish letter. I have been getting it for years. I can almost repeat the above paragraph by heart. You would think I would be tired of reading that letter, but I never am. I know it's applesauce in a way—that son-of-a-gun can write like nobody's business—but just the same, the letter always makes me yearn to buy a five-pound pail of mackerel or a few cans of rich pink lobster. I can't escape—my interest never stops.

Another interest-getting method is what you might call the trick of the unusual. In such letters, the writer goes stunting, like a stunt flier with a plane. Here in my collection, for example, is a letter from a hotel. At the top of the page is a mimeograph drawing of the manager, the chef, the bell-boy, and the French maid. They are all looking very sad and they are saying in unison, "We are troubled, Mr. Frailey." As I read on, I find that they are weeping because I have not been stopping at their hotel. Well, I don't know. The last time I stayed at that hotel they gave me an inside room and the clerk was impertinent.

Here's one with a key attached—it's from a company that wants to sell me a suitcase. The key is supposed to be for the bag they have reserved for me. Old stuff! I have received enough keys to fill a key-ring. This one is typed upside down. For some reason, I am irritated. I suppose I am just too lazy to turn the page.

Another is equipped with a piece of string. I am "reminded" to attend a meeting. These two both have pins. I am supposed to pin checks to my replies. Not so good! I stuck my thumb on one of the pins—that spoiled the effect of the letter.

The postage stamp on this one will come in handy—but I don't like it. You see, I feel obligated to answer whether I want to or not, and that's bad psychology. Here's one printed in white ink on black paper. Too hard to read—too gloomy.

And here are several more, all of the same family—they are typed in peculiar designs. One is a jug, another a huge question mark, the third makes a Christmas tree. I like the tree—because I wrote it—but the other two are much too hard to read.

Here's a clever one—a bill from a hospital attached to a letter. There are many items on the bill, amounting to \$860.00. I begin to boil. I have not been doing business with any hospital. But wait a minute—now I am smiling. It was all a stunt to get my attention. The letter wants to sell me an accident policy which will provide for such bills when they do come along. Okeh—the laugh is on me—but I already have a policy. Good letter, just the same.

The Star—the Chain—the Hook. But the star comes first. Cultivate the ability to *start* right. Try to be interesting. To your friends, probably you *are* interesting. Most people are. It is only when you play turtle and draw your head into the shell that you become cold and stiff. Let the reader know from the very first sentence that he is listening to another human being—a friendly, interesting fellow who is eager to please.

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*Sailing, Sailing—Always Straight Ahead*

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IF SOMEONE GAVE YOU A PENCIL, AND A FEW PAGES OF paper, and then said, "Here, write the history of the world," what would you do? Well, I imagine you would reply, "Brother, it can't be done." And that's about the way I feel as I tackle this job of trying to talk about the *chain* of the business letter in one chapter of this book.

You see, the chain *is* the letter. The star only gets attention, and the hook makes the reader say, "I'll do it." But the chain really softens the reader, and gets him in the mood to say okeh. Like the prize fighter who, round by round and blow by blow, reduces the resisting power of his opponent until he is ripe for the final punch, so the good letter man piles fact upon fact until he, too, has the reader ready for the knockout.

Each fact is a link in the chain. If it is a strong chain, each fact is welded tightly. There are no weak links that the reader can pull apart. There are no gaps in the flow of thought. Each link is a part of the perfect whole, and there is no place in the letter where the interest lags. The star gets attention, but the chain must *hold* it all the way.

Practically everything that I have written, or will

ever write, about better letters has some relation to the chain. Short words, crisp sentences, paragraphs that cling together until the whip is cracked—they all have their part in the making of the solid chain. And it must never be a rusty chain—the metal must be burnished with the milk of human kindness. There can be no jagged edges to wound the reader's pride or unloose his prejudices.

It's all so difficultly simple. You interest, you explain, you persuade. But without the explanation, without that chain of facts, you surely are doomed to fail. Your automobile might have the finest starter ever invented and brakes so strong you could stop on the proverbial dime, but how far would it go without a motor?

Analyze any good letter that you get, and you will easily be able to mark the place where the interest part stops and the explaining begins—the place where the explaining stops and the persuasion begins. Let's try to mark this one.

DEAR MADAM:

Interests { If ever you are boiling and roasting over a hot cook stove every time you prepare a meal—here is your chance to avoid such unnecessary discomfort.

Explains { Or, if you are tired of sweeping, and mopping, and cleaning around a dirty, dusty coal stove—you can be forever rid of those troublesome duties.

Explains { For the next twenty days, we are going to install exactly one hundred gas stoves in homes, free of charge, and give the use of those stoves absolutely without cost for six months. These stoves are the very latest fancy cookers, equipped with baking, broiling, and toasting ovens. They are real beauties—clean and practical for any kitchen.

Explains

One of these stoves can easily be yours. You needn't keep it, either, if at the end of six months you decide to go back to the drudgery of cooking with coal. You can order it out any time, at our expense—or you can keep it by paying only two dollars a month.

Persuades

You don't pay for a thing, the first six months, except for the gas, which you will mighty soon discover is a very cheap fuel for cooking purposes.

As there are to be only one hundred of these stoves sent out this way, to keep from being disappointed you should fill out the enclosed card, and mail it at once. In twenty-four hours after we get the card, one of these beautiful stoves will be installed in your kitchen —ready for you to use.

To a mere man, there is nothing remarkable about that letter, but to the woman who cooks three meals a day on an old-fashioned coal stove, the appeal is tremendous. She need be a slave no longer, and the stove is so easy to buy. Do you wonder that one hundred stoves were sold in three days, and only two returned at the end of six months? Yes, it is a commonplace letter but it *worked*—and the writer was surely a good carpenter. The Star, the Chain, and the Hook all stand out clearly.

Most of the important letters that you write are out to make some kind of a sale. What happens? In the star, you say to the reader, "Look at this—isn't it a dandy?" In the chain, you keep saying over and over, "You ought to buy, you ought to buy, you ought to buy." And then, just when the reader is wavering, you bring out the hook. "Now is the time," you say, "go ahead and *do it*."

You have been in that reader's shoes a thousand times. You had an old car. It wasn't so bad—plenty of good miles still left in it. But the salesman came by with a brand



SIGN HERE!

new model. You couldn't resist looking, but you did not mean to buy. So the salesman got you to take a ride—he let you drive—and then he began to explain. He began to weld a chain of facts about that new car. They were all true facts. One by one, they broke down the resistance in your mind until, all of a sudden, the fellow handed you a fountain pen and said "Sign here."

And sign you did!

Why? Well, the psychologist would tell you that a certain thing happened in your mind. In the beginning, *reason* prevailed, but at the end, *emotion* got the upper hand. That's what goes on in almost every sale. You lead the reader away from the reasons why he should not buy. You begin to create desire by explaining all the wonderful qualities of the thing you are trying to sell. You stir up an emotional response. He forgets those reasons. He starts to want, to want very badly, the thing you are showing. Soon he forgets everything else. You show him how easily it can be his own—and he gives you the order.

I think the great letters all have an emotional background. They make you laugh, or they make you cry. They get away from the commonplace and the conventional. They tap the stream of human interest. Here is one that went to five hundred people who worked in the same office. Four hundred and ninety-five, or exactly ninety-nine per cent, responded. They were mostly low-salaried people who really could not afford to give. But they did.

Only one hour and fifty-five minutes—will you work that long each month for the relief of those who have no jobs?

One hour and fifty-five minutes is just one per cent of your working time. It is one per cent of your

salary that you are asked to give for the aid of the unemployed.

You know the need. People are going hungry in this city. Women and children are living in unheated houses because they have no coal. Kids are being kept out of school because they are ashamed to wear their ragged clothes among other kids.

What if you had walked the streets, day after day, looking for the work you could not find? What if you had folks at home who were hungry, and cold, and sick? What if you had spent your last penny, lost your home, pawned everything of any possible value that you had ever owned—what would YOU do now?

These unfortunate people are not beggars or bums. They are decent, likable, human beings. Fate has given them a rotten break.

We cannot turn away from these things. They are facts. Can we who are still working—who still sleep in warm houses, eat good food, go to shows and parties, enjoy the comradeship of our friends and families—can we shut our hearts to those who have nothing?

The attached card is for you to sign and return today. One penny out of every hundred is easy to spare but when added to a lot of other pennies, it goes a long way toward bringing hope and comfort back to those who are now without either.

Let your conscience dictate your reply. Return the card sure.

Can you mark the Star, the Chain, and the Hook, in that letter? Try it. Study all the good letters that you get. You will find that the flesh may be different, but the skeleton is the same. They all aim to interest, to explain, and to persuade—and they do it exactly in that sequence.

A sense of humor is a handy tool. Humor, when used with discretion, adds spice to any letter. We all like to smile. The letter man is indeed a jewel who can lift his writing out of the rut of the ordinary, who can give it *life*. A clothing store once sent this letter to my wife. It tickled my funny-bone. Maybe it will tickle yours.

MY DEAR AND FAITHFUL COMPANION:

This letter deals with a very ticklish subject. It concerns the Christmas gift you are going to select for me.

Last year you gave me a box of cigars, some screaming green and yellow seat covers for my car, and a red leather volume of Love Lyrics.

The cigars broke Henry, our office porter, of his smoking habit; the seat covers have been a source of real enjoyment to Uncle Nathan, who is color blind; and the Love Lyrics went over in a large way with little Patricia.

This letter I'll admit is a trifle cruel, but I am determined to help you avoid your past mistakes.

Old age has made my golf bag unfit for further service; my riding trousers are fast giving up the ghost; I long for a set of matched irons. I wear size 38 sweater, and 10½ golf hose. Dark blues, maroons, and golden browns are my favorite colors.

These are a few of the things I noticed the other day on the Fourth Floor Sports Gift Section at Boyd's.

Boyd's, by the way, is my favorite store. Need I say more?

Lovingly, your

LORD AND MASTER.

In the archives of the county clerk's office in an Illinois town, someone unearthed the following little letter. It's rather droll—I think you'll enjoy it.

TO ALL THE WORLD, GREETINGS!

Know ye that John Smith and Polly Jones is hereby entitled to go together and do as old folks does anywhere inside Coffers precinct, and when my commission comes I am to marry 'em good and date 'em back to kiver accidents.

B.R.M. Justice of Peace.

Even office memorandums may have personality. Must we wear our good clothes only when away from home? Here is one, for example, in which an applicant is referred to a sales manager:

Will you please tell me if the application of Homer B. Stoeffenmeyer in any way quickens your blood pressure? He is a small, bald-headed, funny-looking fellow (much worse than his picture reveals) but he has the God-saving grace of persistency. I have a hunch that out in the wide-open spaces, he might go over in a big way. Anyway, he has pestered me so often that I finally told him I would let you see his application.

And the sales manager lost no time in replying in the same spirit.

I'll bet the proverbial stick of chewing gum that your funny-looking gentleman hasn't much tact—also, that he has a very good opinion of himself. However, the same thing could have been said of Napoleon—so I'll be glad to talk to him when he comes in again.

Give your letters life! Let your personality shine through. I said this in the first chapter—I cannot say it too often. Strive to be human—interesting. Don't be a stick-in-the-mud. Let your letters talk. Let them move along. Take your reader out and give him a good time. Don't bore him to death.

You can't chloroform your reader with a dose of dry words and then expect him to jump up and dance at your command.

I suppose the best letter I have ever read was written by Bruce Barton. It is too long for this little book—three pages—but every word was necessary. It tells the story of a little college in the hills of Kentucky. No novel was ever more interesting. The letter was mailed to twenty-four millionaires, asking that they join Mr. Barton in giving one thousand dollars to that college. They all did. Why? Because from beginning to end it is a masterpiece of vivid description told without frills. It could not fail to click. Do you want a copy of that letter? All right, let me know. I'll send you one.

Just one more good letter. There isn't room for any more—but here's a tip to the man or woman who wants to write better letters. Start a collection. Keep the good ones—and the bad ones—that come your way. It's just as interesting as any other hobby, and it will help you immensely. Study those letters. Try to see *why* they are good or *why* they are not. And some day, as your interest grows, you'll be writing a book—a better book than this one. No fooling—you will.

Well, this last letter is supposed to be written by a dog. I think you will like it.

They call me Old Ring.

To be frank with you, I am just an ordinary dog. My father is unknown. Just the same, some of my best friends are registered. It isn't the family tree of a dog—or maybe a man—that counts so much. It's the way he lives, and the service he renders to others.

I hope you won't mind getting a letter from Old Ring. You see, I am interested in your success as a merchant, and I have a story to tell which a lot of other merchants have been glad to hear. My story has put extra money in their pockets, and in times like these, extra money is what all you merchants need.

But first take a look at my picture. I'm not kidding myself that I am a handsome dog, but I do look HONEST. After all—even in a dog—beauty is only skin deep but honesty goes all the way through. You can DEPEND on Old Ring.

It's more money in your pocket that Old Ring is thinking about and here's how.

You see, I am one of the 600 dogs that helped to develop Purina Dog Chow—a food for dogs that beats anything on the market. It's a complete ration. For six years I have eaten nothing else and I have never had a sick day.

All over the country, lovers of dogs are praising this food. Everywhere, merchants like yourself have found it easy to sell. Like the extra pants in a two-trouser suit, it means extra profit that could not be earned in any other way. More profit at no extra cost—that's Old Ring's story—and it's TRUE.

My Master said folks might not reply to a letter from a dog, but I said they would. Give Old Ring a break.

Sign the card and I'll have one of my man friends stop at your store to show you this new ration. Sign it now. Take it from Old Ring, you'll be glad you did.

What more can I say in just a few words about the chain that will help you most? Are there two or three essentials that stand out above the rest? Yes, there are.

First, you must eternally sweat for simplicity. Your letter must be as clear as a mountain stream. "The first aim of a writer," said Dryden, "is to be understood." Be sure that your reader understands. He needs to be carefully, painstakingly told.

Second, there must be a certain flow to your letter. All of the examples in this chapter had that flow. One fact must lead nicely to the next. Your letter must *move along*. Some streams proceed swiftly down their channels—others drift aimlessly here and there. So it is with letters. It's the difference between the good golfer who swings smoothly and the poor dub who jabs and jerks in a terrific sweat. Don't press in your letters. Know your story. Decide how it is to be told. Then tell it. Avoid lost motion.

Third, in a man or in a letter, there is often a certain sort of distinction that wins favor. Now that's hard to explain. Perhaps you would call it good taste, or personality, or good breeding. I like a letter written with quiet, smiling dignity. I don't like one that shouts or smirks. Letters can be refined—they can be crude. I suppose we all, at one time or another, have had to learn good manners. They can be cultivated in letters, as in ourselves.

It's a bit intangible—this final thought. But shouldn't every letter that goes out on your stationery be as distinguished in quality as the merchandise you sell?

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## *The End of the Voyage—Time for the Hook*

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YOU CHARTED YOUR COURSE, YOU GOT UNDER WAY, YOU sailed straight. Land! Your journey is almost done. You have only to make port safely. It sounds so easy, but don't decide too quickly. Many a business letter sails smoothly along its charted course—only to sink in the harbor.

A magazine ad tells me of a new plane that I can learn to fly in a few hours. I mentioned this ad to a friend of mine who has been taking lessons for several months. "You must be pretty dumb," I twitted him, "to take so long to learn to fly."

"Well, maybe so," he replied. "But listen, it's not so hard to get started, and it's easy enough when I once get up in the air, but the big danger comes when I begin to put the old ship on the ground. Most smash-ups happen *at the end of the flight*—don't forget that."

So it is with your letters. You take off gracefully, you soar along until your tale is told, but the greatest test of your skill comes when the last paragraph is written—

when you bring your passenger, the reader, surely and happily to his destination.

There is something fatalistic about the end of a business letter. The zero hour has sounded; over the top you have gone. You can't come back. There is no changing your mind after the letter gets into the mail-box. You have made your hit—or the umpire calls "Strike three." You cannot take another cut at the ball.

The moving finger writes, and having writ  
Moves on. Nor all thy piety nor wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line  
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

If all this be true—and who can doubt a word of it—then can you deny the power of the *hook* in your business letter? Out of the skies you have plucked a bright *star* to get the reader's attention. Of the strongest steel, you have forged a *chain* of convincing facts. But of what avail is star or chain if there is no *hook* to finish the job?

Strangely enough, it is at the end of the letter that writers are most likely to stumble. They don't know how, or when, to stop. They cannot strike that final crushing blow that gets the order, that settles the complaint, that wins the goodwill of the reader. They are like a lot of clever prize fighters who never become champions. They go on round after round—feinting, sidestepping, ducking, clinching—but they cannot deliver the knock-out punch.

Here is the place—the end of your letter—where, most of all, your language needs to be vivid, terse, and positive. You cannot afford to be timid or apologetic or formal. It's the very worst time you could select to bring out the rubber stamps:



—NO CHANGING YOUR MIND  
AFTER THE LETTER GETS INTO THE MAIL-BOX

Thanking you for your kind inquiry, and hoping we shall be permitted to serve you, we are,

Trusting you will favor us with your order when in the market for our goods,

Dynamite—those phrases! They drug the reader at the very moment when he should be wide awake. They destroy interest at the very moment when it should be burning fiercely. Beware of such banal monstrosities. They are only the skeletons of a language that has many years been dead.

Where is the hook in this spineless conclusion?

We trust this price will meet with your approval, as we feel it is extremely low. Hoping to have the pleasure of a favorable reply, we remain, respectfully yours,

What a confident, persuasive fellow! Why not say:

To save you time, I am writing this letter in duplicate. Sign your name on the extra copy and mail it back to me at once. The stove will be in Springfield, Saturday—ready to give you the best Sunday dinner you have eaten in many a month.

Why is the second ending better? Because it takes for granted the reader is going to buy. Because it urges quick action so that the stove will be delivered by Saturday. Because it puts in the reader's mind the pleasant thought of the good dinner he is going to enjoy on Sunday. Because it provides an easy way for the reader to buy. No high-pressure stuff to antagonize—just a quiet "of course you will" conviction that the stove is going to be sold. And

the language is simple, up-to-date. It is your language, my language, the kind we use in our every-day talking.

It is the same kind of talking you find in the following letter. Notice how the thought seems to flow smoothly along:

DEAR MR. SUMMERS:

Mr. Brown says you were mighty nice to him, when he called last week. We appreciate your courtesy just as much as he did.

You know *why* Mr. Brown stopped in your store—he wants your business. So do we. But wanting never made anything happen. It is our job to prove to you that the merchant who sells our hats and gloves gives his customers the best value—and makes more money for himself.

Well, we can prove it.

For sixty years, we have been making hats and gloves—making them better each year. We have had our ups and downs but always the same ideal—to give our dealers the best that we knew how to make.

We cannot describe in one letter all of the good points of our hats and gloves. Mr. Brown will do that. Examine his samples, consider the price, decide for yourself.

But we do want to say that our interest in the customer does not stop with the sale. We mean that. After all, service is the big thing in your mind. Ours, too! From the time that you give us an order, you will see something unusual and different in the way we coöperate with you.

Mr. Brown will be seeing you again. In the meantime, sign and return the enclosed card. You don't need to stamp it. It will bring back to you our catalog—full of good reasons for your becoming one of our thousands of happy customers.

Sincerely yours,

Good letter! Good hook! A letter sure to pull a large percentage of replies.

Examine some conclusions taken from a pile of letters on my desk. Notice that I have marked them "strong" or "weak." See if you can tell why.

I would like very much to have a personal interview if you are interested in my application. (weak)

A personal interview will prove that I am the one for the job. You can reach me by telephone, at Forest 2691, or by mail, at 5637 Maple Avenue. I can come to your office any day this week. (strong)

This postcard cost a penny. You can make it worth \$100 or more by putting it in the mail today. (strong)

If you say "Yes," then use the handy card which is enclosed. (weak)

Don't bother to write a letter. Just drop the card in the mail today. (strong)

Won't you give us the order today? (weak)

You are to be the judge. No satisfaction—no charge. Send no money. Just tell us to ship the order. (strong)

You've got the facts. Now you'll want to try Ralston and convince yourself that it's all I've said it to be—and more. And don't forget to send me the top of that first box. Your Magic Spinner will come to you by return mail. (strong)

Why were some of those conclusions weak and others strong? Did you see the reason? Because some were positive and some were not. Be confident. If you are not *sure*, how can you expect your reader to be? The slightest doubt in your mind will quickly sprout in his.

Don't ever say, "We *feel* this proposition will be to your advantage." Do you only feel it? Then you yourself are not sure. *Know* things—don't feel them. Don't *trust*. Don't *hope*. Feeling and trusting and hoping—isn't that puny talking? Avoid such words—avoid them like rattlesnakes. They have never been known to get a reader's name on the dotted line.

Jam on the brakes as hard as you can. All during the letter, you have prepared the reader for the last smashing blow. He is softened—he is ready. Don't let him catch a second breath. You have come to the end of the trail. Give him all you have. Swing—swing hard. If he doesn't go down, then he never will. He was too tough for you. Let him have it—and stop.

Ask any good salesman—he will tell you how easy it is to talk yourself out of an order. In person or by letter, you can fall into that trap. How well I remember a day in Austin, Texas, many years ago. I was selling rice for a mill in Houston. I called on a dealer and showed him my samples. He said, "Give me a carload of this, and a carload of that." Swell! But I kept on talking. I didn't pull out my order book. Finally, he said, "Wait a minute, I'd better see how many bags of those grades I have in stock."

And he did see! "Sorry," he said, "but you'll have to cancel that order. I've got all I can handle." Learned a lesson that day, I did. Every letter writer must learn it, too. Know when to draw your gun. Fire, and fire quickly. Don't let your man escape.

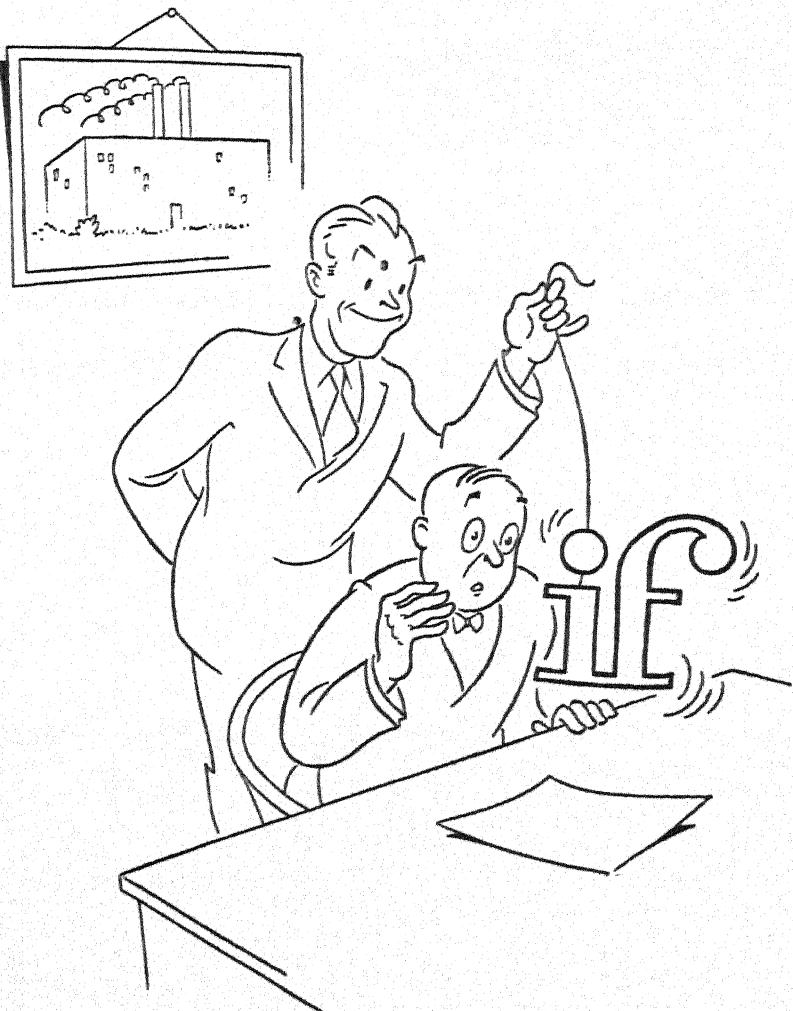
Beware of that little rascal "if." He can do more harm than a boll weevil. Never give your reader the choice between two decisions. Do that, and he will seldom vote your way. When your last sentence begins, "*If you will sign the enclosed blanks,*" what do you expect of the poor reader? You have left him the choice of signing, or not signing. He is a cautious fellow. He decides he had better not sign. It's your fault. You dangled that "if" under his nose. You lacked courage. Why shouldn't he?

"If" is weak, but "when" is lusty. Don't say, "I'll telephone your secretary Friday to find out *if* you can see me." That's timid. Say instead, "I'll telephone your secretary Friday to find out *when* you can see me." That's courageous. Timid folks will always be pushed aside, but the confident ones are hard to refuse.

Probably you have been using all kinds of hooks in your letters. Study them carefully. Some you will find are sturdy and strong—others, perhaps, are as limber as hairpins. They won't hold the weight of the orders for which you go fishing.

For just a moment you and the reader put your heads together. Out of the cares of a busy day, the reader has stopped to listen. He is all alone. You are not there to add another word. The plea has been made, but there can be no rebuttal. He says either "Yes" or "No." You can't run shouting, "Wait a minute, old fellow, there is something more I wanted to say."

No, it is all over. The case has gone to the jury. You can only wait for the verdict. You sank your putt—or you failed. Your ship is safely moored against the wharf—or its lies under the water. You cannot try again.



YOU DANGED THAT "IF" UNDER HIS NOSE

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## *A Pint of Molasses or a Barrel of Vinegar?*

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THIS IS THE LAST CHAPTER OF SMOOTH SAILING LETTERS. I was tempted to put it first. If you had time to read only one chapter, this is the one I would want you to read. With all my heart I urge you to consider thoughtfully the things I am going to say. They are the root and the foundation of all good letter writing. Consider, and *believe* them. All that has gone before will have been wasted unless you do.

We have talked about the kind of words to use, the old-fashioned phrases not to use, the importance of appearances, of grammar and punctuation, how to plan your letter and how to break it down into the star, the chain, and the hook. These are the fundamentals; but mechanically, you can write the best letter in the world, and it will still be a failure unless it has that intangible quality we call the *friendly spirit*.

What makes one letter click and ninety-nine others leave you cold? Don't you know? Well, I'll tell you what I think. The letter that clicks isn't really a letter at all. It's a man reaching out through space with a

friendly smile and the desire to talk things over in man-to-man fashion.

It's the *company* that writes the letter—not you or me. And the company is bigger than any man or woman on the payroll. The company has just one purpose—to render an honest service and thereby reap an honest profit. Everything that helps the company to achieve that purpose is good—anything that works against that purpose is bad. There is no middle ground.

What good could an angry, impudent, or sarcastic letter do the company? You could sock a fellow in the eye for calling you a liar. You wouldn't be much of a man if you didn't. But the company can never take a punch at a customer. Customers are the root of the business. Without customers, there would be no business. Without customers, there would be no job for you.

What a fool you would be to deliberately bait a customer—just because he had made you red under the collar. An eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth? Never! Follow that philosophy in your letters, and you will be a liability in the company. More than that, you are a liability to yourself. You have not yet mastered the great truth that your company is above petty personalities, above anger, above reproach, above abuse, above *everything* that smacks of human weakness.

One day at luncheon I chanced to hear the head of a great company talking to one of the junior executives.

"Mac," he asked, "how many employees have we?"

Mac looked surprised that the president should ask such a question, but replied, "About three thousand."

"Right," said the president, "and how many of them are salesmen?"

"One thousand," Mac answered.

"That's where you are wrong," the president retorted. "If we have three thousand employees, then we have three thousand salesmen. Some of them may not know it, but they are salesmen just the same. Did you ever stop to think, Mac, that out where you live *you* may be the only contact your neighbors have with the company? You *are* the company to them. They are forming their impression of the company, of our products and service, from what you do and say. What they think about the company is strictly up to you."

Is not public opinion built by the pyramiding of personality upon personality? Does this have to be done only by personal contact? Not so. Every written word that travels under the name of the company must contribute to that company's reputation.

Every letter that you write makes an impression. You can't escape that fact. You are helping to build, or destroy, the prestige of the company that pays your salary. The day of the "hot ones" is gone. It really never existed. "I'll tell that guy where to get off," says the letter writer. So he grabs his dictaphone and fires away. He is very young, or very stupid, or he would know better. He puts the reader in his place all right. But how much good has he done the company?

Now, it isn't true that "the customer is always right." Perish the thought! Sometimes, he is dead wrong. But you can be sure that in nine cases out of ten he *thinks* he is right. It's your job to make him happy—to make him happy even though the answer is "No." Happy customers make your business grow. When the business grows, *you* grow. Don't cut off your nose to spite your face. Be bigger than that. Think big. Act big. It is the only way.

A young man once inherited five hundred dollars. He had always wanted to go to college, so he sat down and wrote to three universities. He wanted to know what the chances were of working his way through college, with the help of those five hundred dollars.

From one university the reply was cold and formal. From another he got a cut-and-dried form letter. But from the third there came a friendly little message of encouragement. So James A. Garfield went to Williams College, and now that college can boast that one of its students became President of the United States. All because of a friendly note to a boy who had only five hundred dollars to spend!

Molasses or vinegar? Which do you use in your letters? Lincoln said, "A pint of molasses catches more flies than a barrel of vinegar." Things sound differently in black and white. You can tell a man something that isn't so pleasant, and your smile will take the sting out of your words. But when you write, the ugly part is there without the smile. The reader doesn't understand.

The Supreme Court once defined goodwill as "the disposition of the customer to return to the place where he has been well-served."

Goodwill is just as much an asset as the goods in your warehouse. Sometimes, it is worth a lot more. Not so long ago a company sold out for eighteen million dollars. Seventeen millions were listed as the goodwill possessed by that company.

I mean this to be a friendly chapter. I do not want to show you a lot of ugly letters. You see them every day. None of them should ever have been written. They are festering sores that endanger the health of good business. But here is one—as bad, I guess, as any I have ever seen:

DEAR SIR:

We acknowledge your letter regarding a car of our coal, which you claim was unloaded by a bunch of snow birds, and we also note you have been in business twenty-five years. In this connection, wish to advise the writer has been on the job fourteen years and this is the first time we ever knew you were in business, or that we have had an order from you.

We received this order from the Brownley Coal Company. We have had a number of orders from that company, their credit is good for as much as they care to buy, and it matters little to us whether they dump it in the river, build a road, give it to charity, or sell it to snow birds. We believe you are criticizing the wrong party, as we did not know, or care, to whom this car was to be delivered.

We are sure that the parties buying this coal will be well-pleased with its quality and it might be well for you to get in line and supply this trade.

Yours very truly,

Ugh! What possible excuse could there have been for such a letter? What a queer, distorted vision of service the writer must have had. And yet, every day countless letters just as bad go into the mail! You don't believe it? Listen:

Briefly stated, your attitude is ignorant and ridiculous. We have paid you exorbitant prices for the last twenty-five years. We propose to stop right now.

\* \* \* \* \*

Frankly, it seems very strange to us that all of our other customers are well-pleased and that you alone, among the two thousand, should complain.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are glad, of course, to have your business, but not so glad that we would go to all this trouble to keep it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Your letter about clams at hand. I have furnished the Citizens' Market for some time. They have never made a kick and my check comes along regular. Those are the kind of people I do business with, or I will not do it. Life is too short to be harassed with fault-finding for I know there is no occasion to find fault with the orders I fill. Let me know if you want to buy on this basis.

\* \* \* \* \*

Surely you must appreciate that we are not in the banking business. We expect our money when it is due. We can imagine only one of two things—either you do not have the money to pay this bill, or else you do not propose to pay it.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are surprised that a concern of your reputation should be so lax in keeping a promise. If the quality of your merchandise is like the quality of your service, Hell will be a skating pond before you get any more orders from us.

\* \* \* \* \*

We cannot help feeling that you are exercising that prerogative of a cheap-skate, and in order to get these notes paid, we are sending a draft. Please honor same without any more argument.

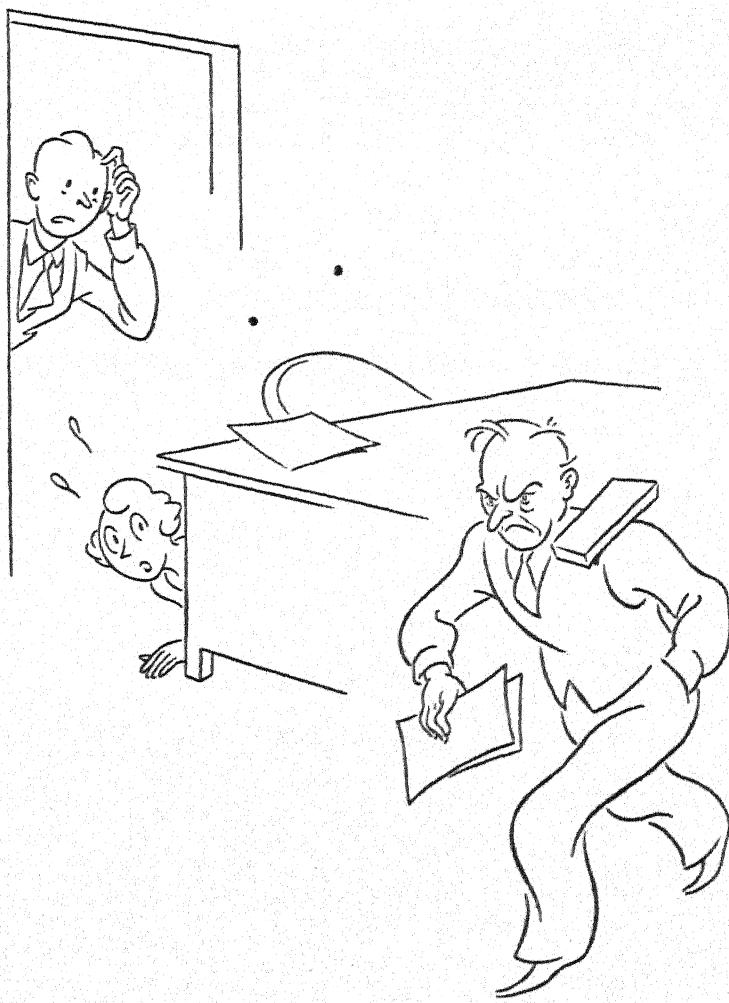
"As we did not know or care . . . ignorant and ridiculous . . . that you alone should complain . . . to be harassed with fault-finding . . . you do not propose to pay it . . . should be so lax in keeping a promise . . . the prerogative of a cheap-skate." . . . Why are folks who

write letters like those allowed to work and draw salaries? Tell me if you know. I don't.

All right, let's turn now to the other side of the picture. Surely it is much more pleasant. It is so easy to scatter friendship in your letters, to plant the seeds of goodwill, which so quickly grow into profit—if you *feel* like doing it. I suppose that's the secret, if you come down to brass tacks. Certain people are friendly by nature—others are not. If you have the "educated heart"; if you really like people, can give and take; if you are tolerant and broad-minded—then you know how to understand and meet other human beings. Your letters will have the friendly spirit. If you are just naturally mean, and spiteful; if you go about with a chip on your shoulder; if you always see the dark side of things; if you are suspicious and jealous of others—well, what would we expect to find in your letters? A crab would be a crab by any other name—but I wouldn't let him write letters for my company.

It is the letter that does not *need* to be written that often builds the most goodwill. The letter from the manager of the hotel where you stopped last week, hoping that you were well treated, and inviting you to come back another time—the letter from the president of the company, welcoming you as a new employee—the letter from the man upstairs telling you he was glad to hear of your promotion—the letter from the department store asking why you returned some goods and hoping you will be better served the next time you buy—yes, all unnecessary letters, but what a wallop they do carry.

For example, here's a collection letter—one of those final appeals that are sent just before a company intends to sue for an unpaid account. They are usually called "last re-



WITH A CHIP ON YOUR SHOULDER

sort" letters. Too often they are nasty and ugly, but notice that this writer still tries to be friendly and human.

DEAR MR. SMITH:

Our collection clerk just came to my desk with a statement of your account, stating that he was about to send it to our attorney.

I have asked him to postpone that action for a few days, as I feel certain there must be a good reason why you have not met this obligation, and although our attorney is a good collector, I don't want to get money in that manner if I can help it.

I do want you to know that you can write to me fully and frankly in regard to this account. If I can still be of any assistance to you, I will gladly do so.

Just use the enclosed envelope, which will bring your letter, unopened, straight to my desk. Let's get this matter straightened out like a couple of sane, logical people, and in a spirit of mutual consideration for each other.

Sincerely yours,

It is astonishing how many chances there are to build goodwill, if you will only look for them. The son of a customer has just been honored in college, a baby boy has come to rule the home of a salesman, a friend has been elected to some office, a man you know at the club has published an article in a good magazine—do you ever take your dictaphone and tell these people how happy you are that they are happy? Why not? It wouldn't take long, and it's lots of fun. Give and you get—that's really true.

A feed merchant in Illinois always sends a greeting to anyone who moves into his territory. It goes like this:

Welcome to this community. We are glad you have picked this spot to live in and we want you to make yourself at home in our store. As a means of getting acquainted, we present you with this card. It will allow you a discount of 50 cents on any \$5.00 purchase that you make. Come in any time soon. We'll be glad to see you.

Good business, that letter, isn't it?

Just this past Christmas I saw a letter of goodwill that was so unusual that I want you to share it with me. Of course, holiday greetings to customers and prospects are quite common, but this one takes a different slant. It is from one company to another from which it had been buying. You might call it a Christmas letter to sources of supply.

ARMSTRONG PACKING COMPANY,  
Board of Trade Building,  
Boston, Massachusetts.

DEAR SANTA CLAUS:

When we were kids we used to write to you and tell you what we wanted you to bring from the North Pole and leave for us under the tree on Christmas Morning. You were always pretty good to us, but somehow we always forgot to write and thank you. We want to do that now.

Of course, when we got a little older, Mother and Dad told us you were only a spirit, but that's all right with us. If you're a spirit, you're just the fellow we want. We're writing to you as the special Santa Claus of Armstrong Packing.

We want to thank you for all those gifts you've brought us over the past year—the best of oils, the

best of service, and the best of friendship with your representative, Mr. King.

And to all those men and women in Armstrong Packing who created you, and who keep you alive, we wish the MERRIEST CHRISTMAS ever and a NEW YEAR packed with all their hearts desire.

Cordially yours,

WELLS & RICHARDSON COMPANY

Several years ago, I stopped at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago. On the door of my room was a message from the president. Maybe I shouldn't have taken that card—but I did. I couldn't resist the temptation. Anyway, I will make amends by letting you read it—then you will want to stop at the Morrison Hotel.

To you who enter this room as a guest, we who manage this hotel give hearty greeting. We may never see you, never get to know you, but just the same we want you to know that this is a Human House, and not a soulless institution. This is your home, be it for a day or night only. Human beings care for you here, make the bed and sweep the room, answer your telephone, run your errands, cook and serve your food. We keep a human being at the desk, and a human being carries your valise. They are all made of flesh and blood as you are; they have interests, likes and dislikes, ambitions, dreams and disappointments, just as you have.

Of course, you have to pay your price. Everybody has to do that everywhere. But the best part of any human transaction is the flow of interest that goes with it. We are not going to intrude upon you, for one of the joys of being in a hotel is that you can be

let alone. We are not going to do any glad-hand and uplift business with you—you did not come here for that—but we are going to take care of you. Whatever rules there are here are made for the purpose of protecting you, not to annoy you.

May you rest well, "full of sweet sleep and dreams from head to feet." May you find liberty here to live your own life in your own way, to have your privacy, your convenience, and a cheerful atmosphere. May you be healthy under this roof, and no evil befall you. May your days be full of success, so that your experience in this hotel will be a happy memory.

We are all travelers from the port of birth to the port of death, wanderers between two eternities—for a little space you lodge with us—and we wish to put these good thoughts upon you—so God keep you, stranger, and bring you your heart's desire. And when you go away, leave for this hotel a bit of grateful feeling.

A few years ago a young man in Oklahoma started a grocery store. He didn't have much money but he was honest. Everything went fine until a fire came along. But the young man was not licked. He sat down the night of the fire and wrote to all his creditors. He told them that the goods had been insured, that he would pay all of his bills as soon as he got the money, and that he hoped they would help him get started in another store.

Two of the jobbers replied that they would have to investigate before giving him any more credit; one sent him a statement, marked in red ink "Please remit"; but the fourth sent him a friendly letter by special delivery. The letter said that they were sorry he had been so unfortunate, that they would wait for their money, and that they wanted to help him to get started again.

Now the young man has the largest store in his city, and to the jobber who sent him the encouraging letter goes the bulk of his business. And why wouldn't it?

I suppose that a lot of the people reading this book have children. Did you ever send a letter of appreciation to any of their teachers? Why not? They don't make much money—these teachers—a few kind words might help to make their work worth while.

DEAR MISS SMYTHE:

Years ago I was teaching—just as you are now. It was interesting work. I knew that young lives had been placed in my hands, and that I had something to say about how those lives were going to turn out.

But the work was always a challenge. Some of the parents were hard to please. There was plenty of worry in the job, and at times the youngsters did get on my nerves.

I think it is the memory of those days that prompts me to write this note to you. I want you to know that Mrs. Frailey and I are grateful for the splendid leadership and training you are giving our boy.

Your inspiration is leading him in the right direction, and we thank you for it.

Sincerely,

Now, wait a minute! I know what you are thinking. I was trying to pull that teacher's leg—to make things easy for my boy! But, not guilty! I knew how seldom a word of praise falls in a teacher's lap. I really was grateful.

Here are just a few more letters that radiate the friendly

spirit. They are taken from a large stack of letters on my desk. I wish that I could let you see them all.

Mr. Ledbetter told me a day or two ago that you had been in the hospital. I am mighty sorry to hear of this misfortune, and am not going to be content until I know that you are yourself again. Without meaning to flatter you in any way, I can't help saying that I do like you a lot, and since I do, it grieves me to think that you have been ill.

\* \* \* \* \*

That was a happy event which took place in your home the other day. Please tell the young man—as soon as he will listen—that some day I hope he will join our Purina family, and prove as loyal as his Daddy has been.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was so sorry to read about the death of your mother and my heart goes out to you. I remember talking to your mother when you and I were working together in Troop 60, and I was greatly impressed by the sweet-ness of her personality and the pride which she seemed to have in you.

Life and Death are beyond our control and we must accept things as they are—bravely. While no one has ever bridged the gap between this world and the next, I do believe that your dear mother is still with you, and that she will keep right on being proud of the good things which you do.

\* \* \* \* \*

Even if you taught sewing—which I judge you aren't likely to do, and which I particularly dislike—I believe I'd like it. Letter writing with you has been a very pleasant experience, and I thank you for it. I

hope you'll teach again next year, and will let me cut capers in your class.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was mighty nice of you, Jesse, to write me that note. I want you to become a big man in the company. I believe you will. You are on the right road now, and you are going to keep on marching forward. And if you need a helping hand along the way—well, you know where to find it.

It's hard to admit you are wrong, isn't it? But there are times, if you have the friendly heart, when there is nothing to do but apologize. Just as this writer did:

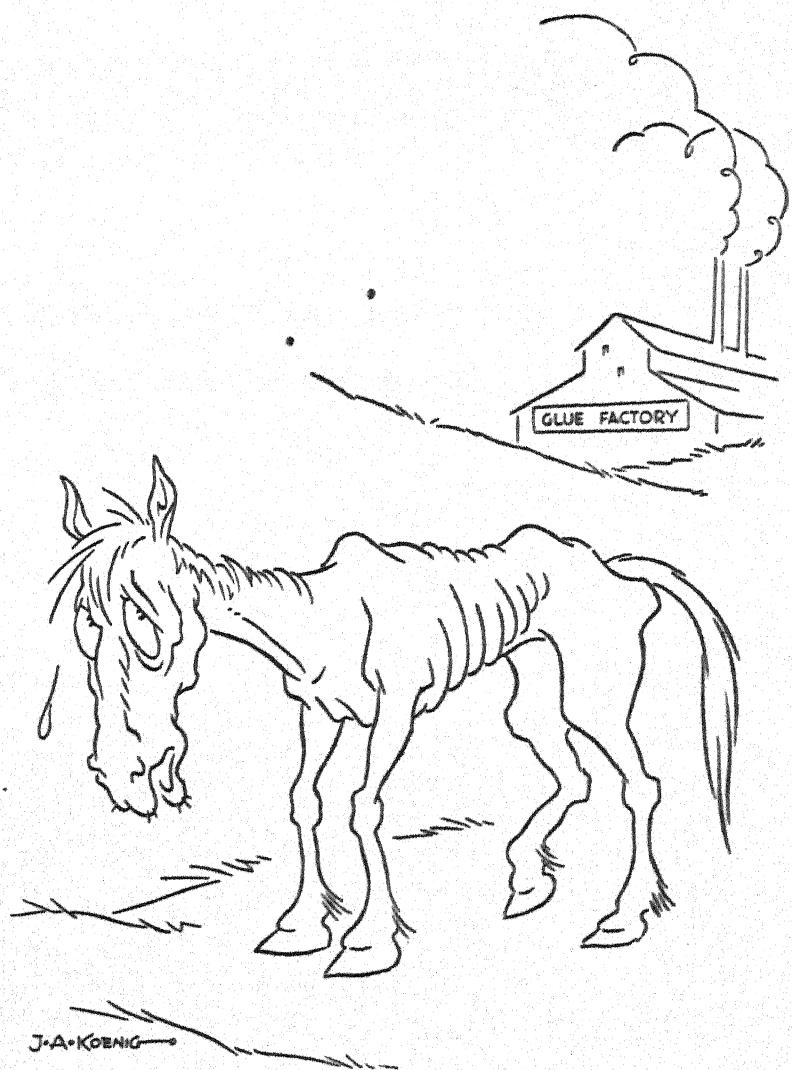
DEAR MR. LUDWIG:

I hope this is the last chapter in a story which has turned out to be quite embarrassing to me, but I owe you—and perhaps some of your staff—an apology, and, of course, am anxious to let you have it.

During the past few weeks I have complained in several letters that three books had been charged on my library card which I had not received. I *thought* it was a just complaint. But it now turns out that one of the men in my department used the card, and got the books. I could give you more of the details—but what good would that do? I hope that no one on your staff was criticized about this incident, but if this happened, please explain that it was all my fault, and that I am sorry.

I suppose there is an enormous fine on these books but I deserve it. Let me know the amount and I will see that it is paid.

Sincerely yours,



A BAG OF BONES

It isn't so hard to be friendly—now, is it? Not if you *are* friendly. But here's a warning. Friendliness cannot be manufactured to order, as you would make bolts, or screws, or buttons. Friendly letters are not cut to a pattern—they flow from the heart.

You cannot say, "I think this old skinflint is trying to beat me out of some money, but I will write him one more nice letter before I sue him." Nor, "These poor saps shouldn't buy this junk but maybe they will fall for it if I write them a friendly letter."

On the 30th of last month we received an order from you. To show how highly it was regarded, I have had it on my desk for several days where I could look at it frequently and experience, over and over, the thrill it gave me.

A feeling of contentment comes over me now as I tell you that on the fourth day of this month your order will leave here, moving in your direction.

Nonsense. The reader could only laugh at such a letter—just as you and I do now.

How can you be *sincerely* friendly unless you feel that way? The writer who thinks he can *force* a spirit of warmth into his letters is riding to a spill. He fools only himself.

Sentiment and sentimentality are horses of different breed. One is a thoroughbred—the other a bag of bones. Genuine goodwill will always be sold at par; imitations are worthless. Get right with the world, think kindly of others, face life and your job as a joyous adventure; then into your letters will come a warm and friendly spirit, winning new friends for yourself and favor for your com-

pany. Does that sound like a sermon? Well, it's only common sense.

If you really want the goodwill of your reader, here are a few things you must never do:

*Don't ridicule.* You can't laugh at me and make me like it. I'll tell you to go jump in the lake, and give my business to someone who seems to like me.

*Don't coddle.* I wasn't born yesterday and I won't believe you. Treat me like a man. Compliments are nice when you mean them, but idle flattery is disgusting.

*Don't bully.* I'm just as good as you are and this is a free country. Men stopped turning the other cheek a long time ago. Sock me, and I'll sock you back.

*Don't patronize.* It's better to write up to Katherine than down to Kate. You may be smart, and maybe I'm dumb, but don't insinuate that you know it. Meet me face to face. I'm not going to get on my knees to any man.

*Don't act smart.* You may be the village cut-up, but business is serious. Be dignified. Act like a fool, and I will think you are selling foolery. I won't buy it.

*Don't question my word.* I'm rather sensitive about that. Call me a liar, and I'm ready to fight. I may be wrong, but tell me so like a gentleman. Don't get tough.

*Don't brag.* If you are a great man, I'll find it out. Don't blow your own horn. Just be quiet and sensible. Plain folks are the salt of the earth. I like 'em plain.

*Don't be gushy.* At college, we had a professor who cried every time he read a poem. It was a painful experience. We didn't like to see him wear his heart on his sleeve. It belonged under his shirt.

*Don't argue.* Get behind me and push gently. If you

are too cocksure, I'll argue back, just because it's my nature to be that way.

What more can I say about the need for the friendly spirit in your letters? It is the one thought, more than any other, that I wanted to drive home in this little book. Have you listened? Do you believe? You probably do.

The old slogan that "business is business" has failed to hold water. It is not true. Big business has learned that it can survive only by rendering a real service to the public. Men like John Wanamaker and Edward A. Filene have glorified business. The happiness and the growth of their employees have meant more to them than making money. They have proved that there can be, and often is, plenty of sentiment in business.

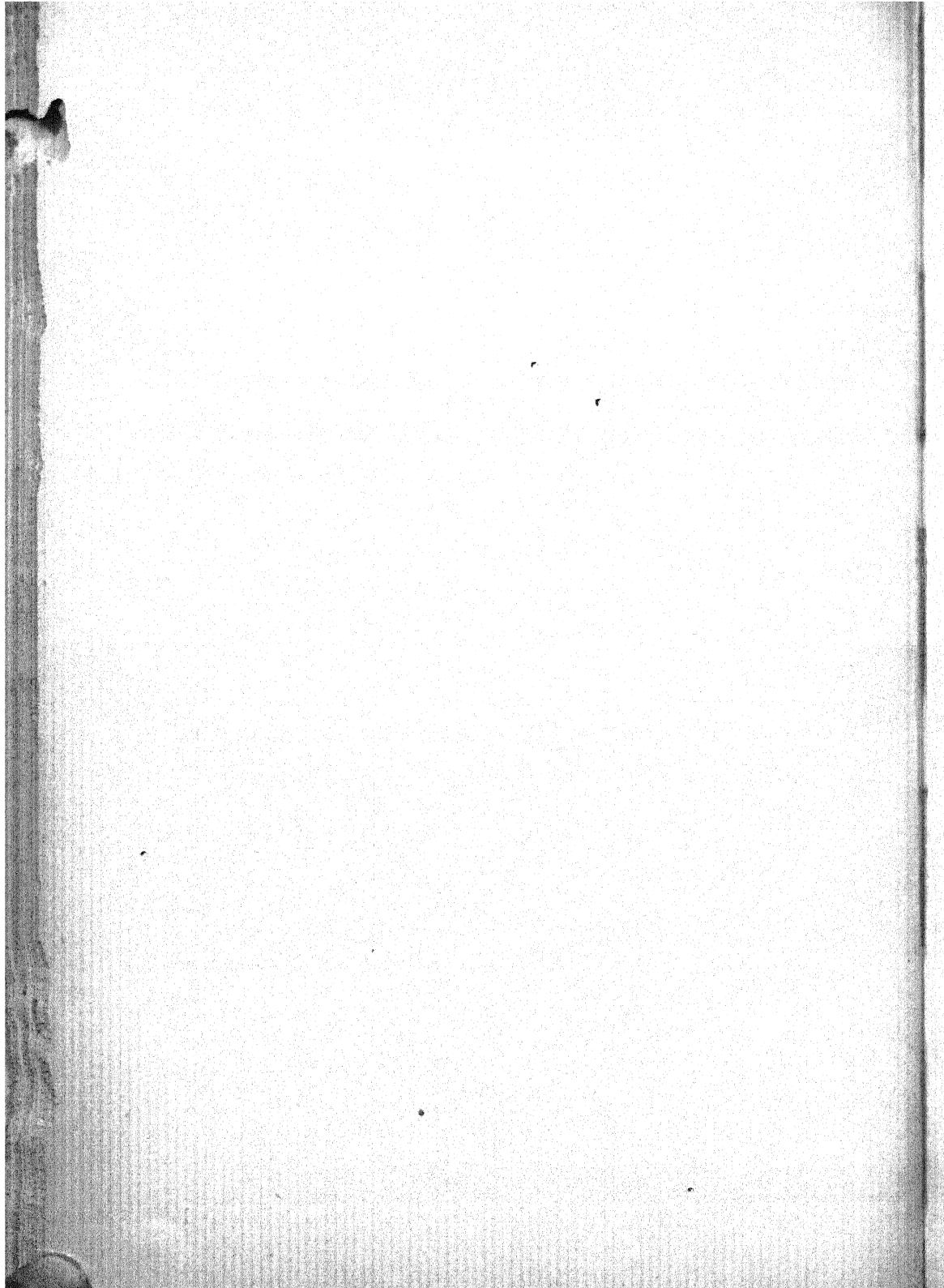
Consequently, the good letter writer of our time not only seeks to transact business as quickly and efficiently as possible; he also tries never to lose an opportunity to make a friendly contact or render a service that will build goodwill for his company. It is mostly a matter of attitude after all, isn't it? The man who enjoys his work, who feels that he is a worthwhile part of civic life, who has a keen interest in other human beings, cannot help making his letters friendly and helpful.

**APPENDIX**

*The Proof of the Pudding*

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FIFTY OUTSTANDING LETTERS,  
SELECTED BECAUSE THEY ARE  
NATURAL, HUMAN, AND FRIENDLY



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APPENDIX

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## *The Proof of the Pudding*

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NOW THAT YOU HAVE READ MY BOOK, I INVITE YOU TO go with me on an interesting journey.

There is an old saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. So now I will show you some letters that illustrate the points we have talked about in this book.

They have been chosen more or less at random from the thousands of letters which I have been collecting during the past fifteen years. They represent what is actually being written in American business by men who hold front rank as letter craftsmen.

They do not in any sense cover all the uses to which letters are put in everyday business. I'll leave that more complete and more technical job for another time.

They are just *good* letters—milled by men whose hearts are ever warm with human understanding, whose language is marked with the distinction of ease and simplicity, whose personality is reflected in all they say.

Some of these letters are very funny; others are quite serious. But all of them are natural, friendly, and human. In each case you feel that a man is talking—a man with a smile—a man you would enjoy knowing intimately.

So take a quiet hour some evening, smoke your pipe, and read these letters. I guarantee it will be a pleasant experience—and one quite worth having.

Dear Mr. Darms:

The worst has happened! Elmer, our treasurer, has found out about your account and is threatening to write you a letter!

As a friend of yours I implore you to pay now before it is too late! People who get Elmer's collection letters never recover. We hide the Accounts Receivable Ledger from him but sometimes he finds it and gets out of hand. If you realized the horror of it you'd mail your check at once. If you had seen the pitiful results as we know them! Young men prematurely aged and strong men broken—babbling in a corner through palsied fingers. It is hideous!

Usually Elmer's letters result in 40 per cent collections and 60 per cent suicides. He may have other words in his vocabulary besides "sue," "legal action," and the unrepeatables, but no one has heard him use any since the spring of 1908.

Elmer's old mother (who has been in a sanitarium since he was seven) tells us that he was a happy, normal boy until he was five. Then a neighbor child persuaded him to trade two old pennies for one shiny new one. When Elmer found out he'd been hornswoggled the change came over night. He earned his first dime drowning kittens, worked in a slaughter house when he was fourteen and is now treasurer of our company. He is president of the League for Restoration of the Death Penalty and has filed a standing application for the job of public hangman.

You see the situation. I like people and I just can't stand the thought of having Elmer destroy your will to live. So please, for your own sake and the ease of my conscience, mail your check today for the \$3.45 owing to us for your Personalized Christmas Greetings—or you may get a letter from Elmer—God forbid.

Urgently yours,

Dear Mr. Carter:

I feel a little like Bill Stebbins. At plain and fancy cussing, Bill could give cards and spades to anybody in Blair County.

On even the most ordinary occasions, Bill's conversation smelled of brimstone, and under provocation—well, it simply burned your ears off.

One day, after the express had gone through, when everybody and his brother were coming down the steep hill from the station, Bill was driving his team up with a load of the White Star Orchard's finest Alberta peaches.

Halfway up, the binder rope broke and every darned peach in the load fell out and rolled down hill. Somebody yelled at Bill—and the women and kids, fingers in their ears, ran for shelter.

Bill hopped off the seat, walked around back and looked everything over—let fly a mouthful of tobacco juice—took a reef in his overalls—and turning to the assembled citizens, said quietly:

"Ladies and Gentlemen—I know what you're expecting. But, honest, I'm not equal to the occasion."

To date, I've written you several letters about your lapsed Reliance Life policy, something you need and should take care of. I hate to see you lose it, because I know you'll always regret doing it. But I've never had a word from you. I guess I'm like Bill—"not equal to the occasion."

Won't you either send in the completed health certificate with your remittance—or, at least, write on the back of this letter: "It's all right, old timer; you've done your part," and shoot it to me, so I can get this matter off my conscience? I'll certainly appreciate it.

Sincerely yours,

**To Our Salesmen and Dealers:**

Sportsmen the world over will never forget Black Gold, winner of the Kentucky Derby in 1924. In size, he was little more than a pony, but there never ran a horse with a heart so big.

And yet, it isn't his victory in the Derby that gave Black Gold immortality. Many years have passed since that tiny chunk of black dynamite went to the post for the last time, but strong men who were at the track that day are not ashamed of tears when they tell you what happened.

A true thoroughbred never quits. His body may be broken, he may even be matched against unconquerable Death, but his spirit still laughs loudly, and his brave heart is never beaten. And so it was that last day in the life of little Black Gold.

They took their places and soon were off—a fine field of blooded horses—and many in the grandstand had placed their bets on Black Gold. But somehow, they didn't mind losing those bets—it was like paying tribute to the great soul of a noble friend.

You see, coming down the stretch Black Gold stumbled—or some said he was kicked by another horse—and his leg was broken. The other horses thundered past him, and he was left alone and helpless in their rear.

But the race wasn't over for Black Gold. Long after the others had flashed under the wire, he came hobbling home—finishing his last run on the three good legs that were left to him. No victor's wreath for Black Gold when that race was done—only a bullet to end his suffering. But God bless that little horse for teaching us what it means to be a thoroughbred.

We need thoroughbreds in business too—products that will stand the acid test, salesmen who will finish each day's job as did that little horse, dealers who will meet the public with the honest wish to serve well.

"John Doe, Thoroughbred"—better to possess that title, than be called a king.

SALES MANAGER

**"Those Grand Resolutions"**

Along with the rest of the world, on New Year's Day I made a lot of new resolutions. I felt good after making them—kind of satisfied with myself. But here it is the last of January and some of these grand resolutions are beginning to crack, and I'm looking for the reason.

I think I have found it. You can't create habits simply by resolving. Only indomitable persistence, trying and failing, and trying again and failing not so soon, will make those resolutions a reality.

I have a task to accomplish. I will eat moderately, play moderately, save moderately, but more than these, I will have a passion to overcome every influence that keeps me from being my best. I won't be a flower that blooms only from January first to about January fifteenth. Not for a few days but all through the year I'll make my life count.

Get out your resolutions, your aims, your quota, or whatever has been your goal. Then say, "I'll make the flame of my resolve just as hot today, and in February, and throughout the year as on January first; and, by the Eternal, I'll do it!"

Persistently yours,

Dear Subscriber:

Our accounting department does solemnly affirm, maintain and assert that you owe us two dollars and fifty cents.

We hate to get excited about two dollars and fifty cents. We also dislike the usual "collection letter" which bursts into tears in the first paragraph and yells for the law in the second.

Trouble is though that you and 999 other subscribers all holding out two dollars and fifty cents leave us \$2500 in the hole. It is this little problem in elementary arithmetic that shakes our faith in humanity.

So (to quote from an esteemed contemporary) won't you "obey that impulse" and send us your check for two dollars and fifty cents, for in this case procrastination is certainly the thief of TIME.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Mr. Scott:

Alone in the office; doing a bit of night work. Outside, the clanging of street cars, the voices of the scrub women banging their buckets about and stopping to exchange a bit of blarney with the night watchman. Mind began to wander from one thing to another. Forgot the work. Thought of Christmas, of the year gone by, thought of you.

A year ago; took the bull by the horns and started a brokerage business. A little nerve, a few accounts, and a lot of friends. Those were the only assets. Here it is Christmas and still in the ring. Nothing to brag about, haven't set the world on fire, but going better every day. Every reason to be happy and merry and joyful just as people are supposed to be at this time of the year.

Been thinking about all of this. Came to me all of a sudden that it is to you, and the other good fellows like you, that the Steinmeyer Brokerage Company owes its small success. You are one of the stars to whom we hitched our wagon and you helped to pull us through. Because of you the candle of the New Year will burn brightly in our little apartment.

Going home now. Got to sleep a bit. Just wanted to put into words the thoughts of the last half hour. Wanted to tell you that it is a merry Christmas for me and dad, and the wife and kiddies. Wanted to thank you, wanted you to know how I felt about it.

Wanted more than anything else to wish you all that you have given us, a very JOLLY CHRISTMAS.

Sincerely,

*Yasmin's Love Story*

Yasmin was weeping.

Hot, bitter tears trickled down her cheeks and splashed upon the wool she was knotting into the warp of a rug.

Yasmin, just turned 14, was experiencing the poignant pangs of disappointed love. Only an hour ago gossip had reached her that Yousuf, HER Yousuf, had announced his engagement to Ayesha, she of the soft hair and the many gold spangles.

Yasmin ceased her weaving. She fingered a blue amulet (charm against the Evil Eye) and meditated. What could she do to win back her adored Yousuf? Yousuf, who gave promise of developing into a master dyer of the little Persian village! She wanted him, but would rather see him dead at her feet than countenance his marriage to a hated rival.

Mechanically she resumed her weaving; but now, instead of the bright colored yarns, she selected only those of sombre hue to work out the design. Unconsciously she was living up to centuries of tradition in Oriental countries, that the rug must match the mood. Brilliant hues for happy moods. Sables and leaden grays to match the heartaches.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Yasmin, delight of my eyes, where are you?" a cheery voice rang through the cavernous weaving shed. It was Yousuf.

The girl paused in her work. Her breath came in a gasping sigh, as she fought back an almost overwhelming desire to fly into his arms. With trembling fingers she continued her weaving.

"Yasmin, my sweetheart! Why do you not answer? It is Yousuf—your Yousuf, who is thirsting for a sight of you. Cool mine eyes, O love-girl of Heaven!"

"Yousuf!" The cry came in a broken gasp, as she flew to him there in the doorway of the dim weaving shed. "Yousuf, my lord, why did you do it!"

"The Prophet have ruth upon me! And what have I done?"

"And have you not only this day made known in the market place your betrothal to that hateful Ayesha? What have you done, indeed!"

"It is a lie, born of the devil! I announced no betrothal; for am I not thine, my pomegranate seed? It is a lie of the evil one, may he be triply stoned!"

And so the youthful troth was renewed and, after a discreet caress, Yousuf hurried back to his dyeing vats and Yasmin resumed her weaving.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is a true story. It is a story woven indelibly into an Oriental Rug. For the Orientals, simple impressionable people that they are, weave their romances, their tragedies, and their childlike biographies into their rugs.

Almost every Oriental Rug worthy the name carries a story. Some are sad, some are thrilling, but most of them are happy little stories of love and romance.

In the Bazaars of the East, our agents purchase only such rugs as may prove doubly valuable to their final possessors by reason of stories woven into them by patient Oriental fingers.

This letter is not intended to sell you Oriental Rugs. Instead, it is meant only as a cordial invitation to you, your family and friends, to visit our Oriental Galleries and listen while we explain the touching and thrilling stories woven into some of the rugs just received from the Land of Romance.

If it is inconvenient to come during the day, come in the evening. We promise you an interesting half hour or more.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Mr. Fischer:

What would you think if you visited a court and heard the following case?

Judge: What are the charges against Mr. Fischer?

B & S: Your honor, he has owed us \$38.50 since November 10, 1937.

Judge: I'm sure he is an honorable gentleman. Why don't you write him? Perhaps he has been delayed for some good reason.

B & S: But, your honor, we have sent him five statements and written him four letters, and he hasn't answered once.

Judge: What is your story, Mr. Fischer?

J.B.F: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Judge: Since there is no defense, we declare the defendant GUILTY and order you to start suit against him immediately.

We hate to do this, but we must go ahead and give your account to our attorney for collection.

Very truly yours,

P. S. You still can change the verdict to NOT GUILTY, but you must mail your check within *ten* days.

Dear Mr. Harrell:

I have just heard of the great personal loss suffered by you in the terrible calamity that so suddenly brought death and destruction to your city.

Buildings and even cities can be restored, but the untimely death of your beloved son is an irreparable loss. At a time like this, mere words pale into insignificance, and while there isn't much we can do to help, we feel it our bounden duty, and are willing and happy to add our mite by shipping you anything you may need in the rebuilding of your business. Of course, we'll gladly extend any kind of credit terms you desire. May we have the privilege of doing that much . . . little as it is?

To hear of an old friend and customer losing practically everything, and to have the life of his boy snuffed out like the flicker of a candle, brings home to us very forcibly the heartaches and sadness from which many people in your city are suffering.

Cruel as these catastrophes are, we cannot stay the fury of the elements . . . that is beyond the power of man . . . but we can do our part by lending a helping hand wherever possible. Perhaps you will derive some small measure of comfort from the knowledge that out of the ashes and debris there will arise a bigger and better city, and no doubt, were it possible, the voices of your boy and others whose lives were so suddenly snuffed out, would chant in unison:

"To you from falling hands we throw the torch,  
Be yours to hold it high."

May the Almighty give you strength and courage to carry on. For carry on you must . . . for the sake of the dependents of those who have gone ahead.

Sincerely,

Dear Jim:

With another year of our lives spent, my thoughts naturally turn to you, and the fifty-four other men, who have been fighting to lift the sale of our products back to old levels.

That you have given your best, goes without saying. You all know that for ten years I worked in the field for our company. Nobody could understand better than I do the problems which you have met so fearlessly, or the moments of discouragement which must have been yours. You know that I wish you happiness. I hope you have it in great measure.

But to men of ambition, like you and me, great happiness can only come with great progress. You want to flap your wings and fly back to the times when sales were more abundant—you want to get out of the muck and the mire into which the depression threw us all.

Jim, I think more than anything else we need to cleanse our minds of all that we have gone through—to start the new year just as we would pick up a new book, with the old one closed for the last time and put away on the shelf. I know of a salesman who did that.

Buck Newman was his name, and he worked in Texas. He was a great giant of a fellow, and in his territory there wasn't a soul who didn't know and like him. But Buck had been stubbing his toes, too, against the brick wall of the depression. He was selling half of what he had once sold. He wasn't happy.

So he made a rather remarkable resolution for the New Year. He decided that he was going to be born again—to start out absolutely CLEAN. So he bought himself a new suit, new shoes, new hat, and even new underwear. The last day of the old year he got a new haircut, and the next morning he gave his skin a good scrubbing. He meant to see that a brand new Buck Newman went out to work on that first day of the new year.

I wonder, Jim, if old Buck didn't have the inspiration which you and I can use in making something more of ourselves in the coming year? To wash our minds clean of all negative thoughts, to be born again—new inside and out—to be the high-stepping, confident fellows we were five years ago.

Maybe that's the only way to happiness for you and me, Jim. Think about it as the New Year dawns.

Sincerely yours,

Yesterday it was I . . . tomorrow it may be you . . . the next day some one dear to you. Certain it is that one of us in eight, reaching middle age, will be delivered to Charon's ferry via the cancer route. No idle statement this, but cold statistics, medical records checked by cancer specialists.

I desire to serve, to save lives, if I can . . . to warn . . . to tell you what I know . . . to help you escape as I escaped. I have had cancer. It was cancer of the tonsil, a dangerous location and a bad type. I have heard the lapping of the waters of the Styx. That I did not cross is due to a devoted band of specialists, scientists and nurses who retrieved me from death.

My story begins in Central Africa. A throat irritation, slight, not even painful, would not subside. Warned, I airplaned for seven days, flew across the Mediterranean, to France. Then a fast steamer to New York. In all, thirteen days from Central Africa, suspecting that the Grim Reaper was traveling with me. He was!

Inquiry led me to Memorial Hospital, for over fifty years a fortress of scientists, battling, studying, standing bravely in the path of the world's greatest scourge, subtle, secretive, merciless, implacable in its ruthless advance. Their knowledge and skill saved my life, by methods which a few years ago were unknown.

My message to you is that MANY STRICKEN MAY BE SAVED—especially if discovered and treated promptly. Act immediately! Suspect every persistent irritation! Inform yourself of the early signs of the different forms of cancer. Avoid quacks as you would a rattlesnake. I owe my life to Memorial Hospital and to the promptness of my entrance there.

I ask you and your friends to do what no one person alone, in these times, is rich enough to do adequately. Reach out a helping hand to this institution. Dig deeply into your pockets. Memorial may sometime save your life or that of one you love.

The address is Memorial Hospital for the Treatment of Cancer and Allied Diseases, 2 West 106th Street, New York, N. Y. It was the first cancer hospital in America. It was founded over fifty years ago by those whose loved ones died from cancer.

Today it is a broadly organized institution affiliated with Cornell University. It conducts undergraduate and post-graduate education. Visits to the institution number 75,000 annually. It is saving lives, studying the causes of cancer, and developing new methods of treatment. Will you help it?

Very truly,

Dear Mrs. Underwood:

Maybe I am still old-fashioned, but the songs I like best to hear are the ones we sang in the little homestead in Kansas where I lived as a kid. There wasn't much to do in our village after the sun went down—no movies to see or automobiles to drive—so families got to know each other better than nowadays.

But don't think those nights were dull. There were always some books to be read out loud, some corn to pop, and once in a while the great event of pulling taffy. Then, before the evening ended, it just seemed natural that we should gravitate to the old organ. Mother played and led the singing in her sweet soprano voice, and Dad tried to sing the bass. And we kids just went along the best we could—from the baby to the oldest. Maybe it wasn't very good music, but we always went to bed feeling mighty close to each other, and I reckon it was just as much fun as kids have today.

You know, Mrs. Underwood, that scene around the organ came back to me today as I sat here in my office thinking about a few of the old friends of our business who seem to have drifted away from us in the past year. I wondered what had happened to interrupt our friendship, what I might say that would let you know how happy we would be to see you again—how welcome you still are in our store.

And then the words of one of those old songs came back to me. I think it must have been the one we all liked best, as we sang it every night.

"Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot"—maybe you used to sing it, too.

No, we don't want to ever forget our old friends. We don't want to forget you. It isn't the business that you might give us that means so much—not in dollars and cents. But there are certain folks in our town that we got to know over a long

period of years. They seemed like silent partners in our business.

Come in again real soon, Mrs. Underwood. You really "belong" in our store.

Cordially yours,

If a body owes a body  
And gets so nice a dun;  
If a body don't pay a body,  
He's just a son-of-a-gun.

Friend Sam:

I've just read your long letter telling of the argument that you had with buyer Ed Hutte, and I'll say one thing—you certainly told him a mouthful.

There isn't any doubt about it. What you told him was the truth, and you weren't afraid to call a spade a SPADE.

I know that you've chuckled to yourself every time you recalled the interview. You certainly won the argument.

But, Sam, how are you going to feel when you call on him your next trip? And it WILL be necessary that you call on him. You know that.

And how, Sam, is he going to feel? Not a bit friendly, I'll warrant.

I can just picture the two of you fighting like a couple of cocks in a pit. And that won't be good for our business, Sam.

Now, you won the argument. No doubt of it. And you got a lot of personal satisfaction out of doing so. But you need Ed's business, and so do we, so here's what I suggest you do to make sure we'll get it.

Write Ed a letter of apology. Tell him you lost your head. Tell him you're sorry. Tell him that you are usually a "right guy," but you were dead wrong in "sounding off" as you did. Say you'll be grateful if he'll forgive you.

Do this for business' sake, Sam, and send me a copy of the letter you write him. This is one time when, I think, it will pay to pocket your pride.

Sincerely,

Gentlemen:

Maybe you've heard this story somewhere—but it's a good one—and good enough to repeat any day.

Recently a firm installed a large piece of machinery. When everything was set, ready to let 'er rip, the thing simply wouldn't start "nohow."

Engineers were called in right and left, and each, in turn, fiddled around, but no luck. She just wouldn't go, and that was that!

Finally, as a last resort, the foreman called in a two-for-cent mechanic. (So they thought.)

In he strolled with his small sledge hammer, and walked over to the machine, glanced around for a second, and set his eye on one spot. He struck three blows with his hammer, and lo and behold, much to the surprise of the on-lookers, off she went!

"How much do we owe you?" yelled the foreman.

"One thousand and three dollars," said the mechanic.

"What's the thousand and three bucks for?" returned the foreman.

"Three bucks for three blows, and a thousand bucks for knowing where to hit it."

So, in the long run, if a fellow knows his business, it's a cinch and if not, it's too bad for both him and the fellow he's doing it for.

We've got a grand bunch of mechanics working here and believe me they know their stuff when it comes to numbering machines—making them and repairing them.

So we can safely say you're taking no chances when you let them serve you. As a matter of fact, it's the best assurance you have of turning out ACCURATE NUMBERING and at the same time SAVING YOURSELF TIME—WORRY AND EXPENSE!

Numerically yours,

Dear Friend:

Once upon a time there was a cross-eyed pup and he got that way from looking at a bee on his nose.



That bee was the most important thing in that pup's life.

Now, I've become cross-eyed but for a different reason—watching the mails daily for your renewal.

You have become the most important thing in my life. Ten days ago you turned loose one of your most valuable possessions, your accident policy, the greatest bargain you ever bought.

Let's get this all straightened out.

Sit down now and mail me a check for \$3.50 and we'll both be happy.

Yours truly,

Dear Mr. Barth:

In the month of March, the year 1926 . . .

A young man set out in the earnest quest of earning a living. In the type of business which appealed most to him, he cast his lot.

It took but a very short time for this young man to learn that earning a living in the terms of dollars and cents was not the primary requisite of employment.

He found in rubbing shoulders with a world of realities, that other things mattered far more—unselfishness, consideration of others, conscientious service, and above all, honesty.

He learned, too, that his most valuable asset was not his bank account, nor his worldly goods, nor things material, but rather, his loyal friends.

Having personally played the role of this young man, I have learned these things and learned them well. I therefore want to express to you my most sincere thanks for your loyal friendship and your genuine cooperation in the past. They have made it possible for me to pass the milestones—one by one—and have contributed largely toward making my eleventh anniversary in the insurance business possible.

Very truly yours,

**Your Baby!**

She is the priceless possession you treasure most in life. You live for your baby . . . you watch the tiny tot's every move . . . and you say to yourself, "I'll never forget" how she looked doing this and that.

In later years the memories you have of your baby will be the sweetest joy you'll know. BUT—memories sometimes fade. There is only one way for you to make sure you'll never forget, and that is with . . . pictures!

Snapshots are such intimate, personal possessions—fragments of lives most important to you—bits of family history. And they are so very inexpensive. Why not start *today* to keep a record of your girl's life? Take a snapshot of her cute little smile as she lies in her crib . . . of her first brave step all alone . . . of her toy dog and doll . . . wearing her first little dresses . . . "growing up" to wear her first party dress . . . her friends of high school days and all the other important steps in her life.

There is this to be considered too—when your girl grows into womanhood she will probably leave you. Perhaps she will go away to school, and there may be marriage later on. You'll be alone then. You'll miss her, and you will try to think back to the days when she was a tiny mite, cuddled in your arms.

What a comfort and real joy it will be if you can bring out the faithful old Snapshot Album. Those pictures, taken with a KODAK or LEICA today will be clear, expressive, natural and life-like pictures fifty years from now. The few pennies it will cost you to buy a camera and keep a snapshot album will be repaid to you many times. You will value every single picture . . . and so will the girl herself.

Come in and see our large selection of cameras today. We have the largest stock in town . . . in size, shape and price for every purpose, from \$1 up.

Remember, "the pictures you'll enjoy tomorrow you must take TODAY."

Cordially yours,

Dear Dave:

I thought of you, I really did yesterday about quitting time I says better run out and buy a Christmas card and send to Dave.

So I fought my way through a crowd of shoppers and into a Gifte Shoppe.

A tall girl with some ear pendants that looked like a set of Chinese dinner gongs said "Something, sir." I started to say I'd take chop suey but remembered that it was Christmas I was saving my indigestion for so I says, "Yes, I'd like to peek at some Christmas cards. Something about a dime a throw."

"Right ovah heah pleath" says she and I followed her into an alcove where incense was burning. The place had an exotic influence over me so oriental and "bazaar."

"Them there cards is mighty popular this year," says Ming Toy as she dealt me a hand.

Of all the cold fried eggs I ever looked at these same cards were it. One showed a picture of an ossified man in a black robe and angular shadows in pea green and sick yellow and a bunch of lettering in mourning that nobody could read. And that one was the ace of the bunch.

Guess I looked puzzled.

"They are the latest Art Moderne Noel cards," volunteered the clerk. I admitted they were different but excused myself from buying by telling Madam that all my friends were business people who had curved letter openers for opening circular letters and consequently they wouldn't be able to handle angular Noel cards.

Perhaps I'm behind the times but I wish you'd take the enclosed check and spend every cent of it for popcorn, cranberries, snowballs, tinsel or anything that goes with a real old-fashioned Merry Christmas.

Don't thank me for it. Thank Santa Claus and the gal in the Gifte Shoppe.

Yours always,

## To Our Salesmen:

You all know the story of the liberty bell—how after the Declaration of Independence was signed, they rang and rang that bell. You can still see that bell in Independence Hall, Philadelphia—emblem of freedom, victory, growth, of a nation where men fight fearlessly, live joyously, give and take in fellowship, unhampered by the mailed fist of the dictator, or the “divine right” of kings.

Well, it's time we did some bell ringing in our own business—declaring our independence of the false motions that came upon us during the years of depression; of the inhibitions that keep men from being their own selves, at their very best, all the time; of the idea that strong men can ever be anything but strong, or that good salesmen can under any conditions fail to sell.

Ring the bell . . . four glorious, purposeful years are ahead of us. The election is over, our President has been chosen. Forget the foolish fears that any election could ever upset the traditions of our nation—or change one iota the basic principle of our government, of the people, by the people, for the people.

Ring the bell . . . business is good. Business is getting better every day. Opportunity waits in greater measure than ever before for the company that serves a common need—with dependable products, honest service, and workers that strive to please.

Ring the bell . . . strong men are on the march, up to new peaks. Let no man whine if he be left behind. For those who will pay the price—work, study, fight—progress, promotion, honor will not be denied. Hold the torch high, keep stepping—to those of stout heart Victory is assured.

What a picture for the coming of the New Year. Your year—my year. Year of plenty—year of purpose! Wish you hap-

piness? Certainly, the happiness that comes of a job well done, of obstacles conquered, of sure and steady progress.

Yes, ring the bell. Ring it with all your might. Let it crack wide open from the power of your blows. Growth—power—success. So speaks the bell of the New Year.

Expectantly yours,

Dear Skippy:

I sure hope you have all the cats in the neighborhood under control, so that you can take time out to read this letter and give me a hand.

Skippy, I need some help, so as long as we know each other pretty well by now, I am going to ask you to deliver this message to Bill Bercher (the prospect) for me.

Do you remember the day when Mrs. Bercher wasn't looking and I showed you a picture of the Norge Rollator Refrigerator that matched your Norge Range? I said to you, "Skippy, this kitchen will never be complete until that refrigerator is here to match the range!" Then you shook your head sadly and said, "Doggone it, I know it!"

Well, Skippy, there's only one way for us to solve that problem, and that is for us to sell this Norge Refrigerator to Bill Bercher, and if we do, I'll give you a swell string of wieners, and a soup-bone, for commission for helping me close the deal!

Here's what you have to do. When he is through supper and feeling good, put your head on his knee and say, "Bill, I've been talking to that tall, funny looking Swede by the name of Jerpe.

We both agree that a Norge Refrigerator should be in that kitchen, but he is afraid to come out here to sell it to you because you might sic me on him and ruin a beautiful friendship, and besides he has only one pair of pants to that suit he always wears."

Tell him about those nine different shelf arrangements, and that in the new job you can store a whole case (Bill knows what I mean), watermelons, turkeys, and other big items.

Ask him to come down to the store Saturday afternoon with Mrs. Bercher. Skippy, if you handle this job right, all the cats in the neighborhood will wonder why you disappeared, because you'll seldom leave the kitchen!

So long, and thanks for the help,

ANDY

Dear Mr. Wightman:

We don't give rare coins but there's more than one way to get your money's worth out of a used car.

The idea that a certain dealer is about to sprout wings and make things heavenly for used car buyers has been going the rounds so long that it is getting so it rattles.

The reason we give our customers their money's worth, isn't because we are so big-hearted we can't help it.

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***Buys Car for \$150; Finds a Dime in It Worth \$450***

Alliance, O., April 1.—Mrs. W. H. Shaw of Alliance reported that her cousin, Roy Koontz of Bloomington, Ind., bought a used car in Cleveland for \$150. When he cleaned the antique he found a dime dated 1821 under a seat cushion. A coin expert offered him \$450 for the dime.

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If you want to know the reason, it is because we want to stay in business for quite a few years yet to come.

The Mrs. has her mind set on sending our boy Charlie to college. If he is like I am it will be wasted, but the Mrs. says he isn't and that's that.

I haven't enough money to retire on and I can't stand to loaf when anybody is looking; and we have such big windows in our show room that people are always looking. So for those reasons I figure my best bet is to treat buyers right so they will come back and tell others they got a good deal from Charlie Fleming.

Right now, I have some cars that are worth looking into. You won't find any rare dimes under the cushions, I look for them myself, but you will get all you bargain for.

I'd like to show you the 1935 Dodge Coupe, Ben Rice traded in last week. \$495 takes it and you cannot take as long as you like to pay for it. No terms beyond 20 months go here.

Cordially yours,

Dear Friends:

From now on you'll probably find Pittsburghers who once talked about "my operation" busily engaged in reciting what happened "during the flood." We've been so busy cleaning up after old man river, that this our first opportunity to tell about our experiences.

Of course, we are back to normal again and things are running along much as if nothing had happened. But things did happen!

Warned by the flood of 1907, we built our plant well above the high-water level of that year and provided a flood wall which gives three feet additional protection. But experience was a poor teacher to us and to scores of great industrial and utility companies in the area.

At 11 P. M. on Tuesday, March 17th, the water reached factory floor level; three hours later it was over the flood wall; and by 4 P. M. Wednesday we had nine feet of water in our factory and fifteen feet in the foundry.

In the midst of the excited activity within our own walls, we suddenly realized that sixteen feet of water had trapped a great many people in the houses which line the street opposite us. In forty-five minutes our men built a nine-passenger boat and launched it in the street. In the next couple of hours the "SALVATORE THE FIRST" (someone had found time to paint a name on the live-saving craft) carried at least 150 men, women and children to safety.

We are mighty proud of our men. Not only for what they did during the high water but for the way they have worked since. Cleaning up has been largely a matter of muscle and sweat—and loyalty to the job. No permanent damage was done, but a tremendous amount of digging, hauling, scraping and washing was required to make the plant ship-shape again. If you could have seen the horrible mess on Thursday, the 19th, you would realize we faced what looked like a month's task. It was com-

pleted in a week. On the 27th, power was restored to our lines and Miller went into production again.

We appreciate the many telegrams and letter of encouragement and offers of help which came from so many of you. It was a trying, in fact a terrible experience, but it has given us all a new understanding of what trouble really is. Nothing is going to be so hard for us now; difficulties we once grumbled over will seem trivial. While we have always tried to do our best, our best will be better from now on. We, and all of Pittsburgh, are running full blast again, ready and anxious to serve.

Your very truly,

Dear Mr. Graham:

BEFORE I WENT to work with "Vic" Groves, I had arthritis, astigmatism and adenoids. Now all I have is a pain in the neck.

I tell you the man is marvelous. He has everything except a varicose vernacular. He can't spell, punctuate or dictate—writes everything out in "wronghand" (that is what gives me the pain in the neck, trying to transcribe what he thinks is writing).

But, despite those handicaps, he gets results by mail.

Once he wrote what looked like a run-of-the-day letter. It pulled 1721 trial subscription orders. Oh, yes, we mailed more than 1721 letters.\* Twenty thousand, to be exact. He was glum for several days because he expected 20,221 subscriptions on that.

Just recently I typed 65 letters with my lily white hands and college profs "catapulted" \$30 orders into the office so fast that I counted 17 in one day.

"Missed again," croaked the old pessimist.

I am sure that he never will be satisfied with anything he does but the friendly letters he gets from men like "Jim" Moseley, Boston; Ralph Rice, Oakland; John Howie Wright, New York; Jules Livingston, Binghamton; Maxwell Droke, Indianapolis; James Mangan, Chicago; and the things they say about his letters surprise me.

Just to look at him, you wouldn't think he knew a 16-letter word for yak. . . . There have been days when he has made \$50 before noon just by writing letters that nobody could read until I translated his scrawl into English.

Not a bad "bloke" to work with or to have working for you.

If you saw his files, you would know that he lives on letters. He can write almost anything but an application letter for a

new job. His copy must not be too bad, either, because for a year and a half he had more "ads" reproduced by the Best Ideas Service, Chicago, than any other U. S. A. newspaper promotion man. He smokes, drinks and roller skates. He has no bad habits except tucking his napkin under his chin and wearing spats to aggravate me.

I think he is looking for another job because I just wrote a letter that said he was quitting before the boss got too serious about the next depression. I don't think he's egotistical, but "Vic" claims that he wrote the letter that brought on the last depression. It was a "pop-up" in 1929 announcing that business was going to be better and better. He is off "Charlie Swab" as a prophet!

\* \* \* \* \*

If you have a place for an experienced, full-time direct mail man with fresh, real experience and a sense of humor, write "Jim" Mosely and he'll see you have some of "Vic" Groves' samples and stories. "Vic" may be just the man YOU want!

Sincerely yours,

Dear Charlie:

Let's sit down, figuratively speaking, and talk this thing over. I'll admit you've got reason enough to stand but I think we'll get places quicker if we're comfortable.

It's a ticklish business, Charlie—this price business and yet it's the most important item in your and my existence. It's been our contention all along that "Price Is but Part of Printing." A printer can break down his cost on a job only to a certain point. He can allow so much for composition, ink, type, paper and printing but the one thing that no guy's been smart enough to figure is an arbitrary cost on Craftsmanship.

I think all the heat's been raised on account of our refusing to do a job that we know in advance won't come up to our standards because of a too-low estimate. And Charlie, there is a difference in good and bad printing even in the simplest jobs. Ed Boetcher will be glad to call and explain our point of view on the matter further.

But probably more important to you is again this angle of price and profit. You're in a good business. You've got clearly defined grades of meat and prices adjusted accordingly. For example, when a customer complains (maybe one of our employees for all we know) about a piece of beef liver being tough you can always say the calves liver is a better kind of meat. While your beef liver is the best obtainable it still doesn't compare to your calves liver. You carry both of them because some people like beef liver.

We stock only one kind of quality, Charlie, because it's our native cussedness to insist that people should like only the best. You and I have grown to be the biggest concerns in our respective fields around here. The quality of our efforts has always been high and neither one of us intends to lower our standards that have earned us the reputation we now enjoy.

We do quite a bit of business with you and damn-it-all, we'd like to do a job for you. It'll be a bang-up one too, I assure you.

Expectantly yours,

Dear Mr. Maddox:

In a certain office . . .

The bookkeeper owed the stenographer two cents.

The stenographer owed the office boy two cents.

And the office boy owed the bookkeeper two cents.

One day the bookkeeper finding a penny in his pocket passed it to the stenographer discharging half his indebtedness. The stenographer passed it on to the office boy who paid it to the bookkeeper, who sent it around the circle again. Thus each of the three became solvent and the bookkeeper still had his original capital.

Now it will work for you that way, too. Increasing the circulation of money will do more to help business than any single thing. You put your check, made out to us, in the enclosed self-addressed envelope and mail TODAY.

We'll pay all our bills, and pay off the help. These people will buy from the butcher and the baker and radio maker and pay their bills and you'll get your share of it back and we'll all be happy and out of debt.

Please, right now, insert a little good cheer in the form of a check in this envelope and drop it in the mail.

Cordially,

WE  
heard the  
other day of a  
company which has  
a large Chinese  
bell to ring if  
an em- ployee  
does something  
outstanding.

When this happens  
the president himself steps  
out of his office to strike the  
bell. It is thought to be a great  
honor when employees are recognized  
by the bell. So at this time of the year  
when we are all made mellow by the Christ-  
mas spirit, the thought came to us that we  
too should have a bell . . . one to ring in rec-  
ognition of our stockholders who have, through-  
out the year, assisted in the sales of our prod-  
ucts. That we are all, stockholders and work-  
ers, vital parts of a great service institution  
which could not endure without mutual coöperation  
and eternal enthusiasm, does not need to be told.  
The successful operation of our business, and the  
dividends which you have received, are the direct  
result of our unity of purpose. So we send you this  
company bell, and we strike it with the sincere hope  
that in the home of every stockholder great Christmas joy will  
prevail. To you and yours, we wish the very best that life has

to  
give  
day by  
day!

Friend Smith:

Yes, we made a mistake in sending you those Jonathan Apple trees. Just as soon as I got your letter, the Delicious trees you ordered were sent out of here in a hurry.

You will get them almost as soon as you get this letter.

I am sorry it happened and want to thank you for getting after me about it right away.

Mistakes are bad enough when we get a chance to correct them. They are a whole lot worse if we don't. We try hard not to make them but some slip by in the rush of thousands of orders every day. The important thing is to make them good right away and we sure try to do that.

If you want to keep the Jonathan trees, send me \$2.50. That is a pretty stiff cut in their price but I am willing to let them go at that rather than to ask you to send them back and have to pay the express charges at this end.

If you haven't any use for them, I will appreciate your sending them back to us Express Collect. You can put them right back in the bundle which brings the Delicious trees to you.

Let me know what you are doing about it and, whether you keep the Jonathan trees or not, I hope you will come again soon with an order for some of the things we have to sell.

That way we will know our mistake is forgiven if not forgotten.

Sincerely,

Gentlemen:

If you lent a good friend of yours a ten dollar bill—then every time he saw you coming he turned on his heel and walked the other way—you'd feel pretty bad about it. Not so much over the money, but the principle involved.

And that's pretty much how we feel about the two previous letters written you asking why you relegated my company to the "Also Ran" on your purchases of Mechanical Rubber Goods.

Naturally it hurts to lose a customer—you know that. Besides, we always try real hard to do the right thing. Fifty years in business without a break is, you'll agree, ample proof of reliability—high quality—and fair prices of Quaker products.

So, just what is wrong? Won't you please tell us? Give us a break. My Company will meet you better than half way. More—it cannot do. Less—it will not tolerate.

Now—whether it's "Brickbats or Bouquets"—good or bad news —please say something and mail it in the attached prepaid envelope. Your letter will get some quick action. No fooling either.

Cordially,

Dear Friend: The boss asked me to write a circular letter telling about our new coal and wood for it long time. I thought so, I started out and wrote a whole lot of stuff that sounded like maybe our coal was so precious that we had to move it in padded trucks and that our wood was all hand-polished and fitted together with greased dovetail joints, so you didn't have to split it or anything.

Then, I read it over and asked myself if I believed all of that and I had to say "No".

As a matter of fact all we've got in the fuel line is good coal and wood at prevailing prices, and an honest desire to serve you well.

When you order nut coal from us you know that you won't get hunks so big that you have to call in the neighbors to help you break them. Fir and tamarack doesn't mean scrub pine and willow sprouts with us, either. You get what you order when you want it, when you order from the GREAT WESTERN. We'd like to have you call Broadway 2101 the next time you order fuel.

Sincerely yours,  
Sizzling Heat (Himself)

Dear Mr. Winthrop:

You know accidents will happen even in the best of regulated families.

Now, Billy Floyd, our genial representative in your part of the country, slipped and met with a very painful accident, injuring his ankle to the extent that he will be held virtually a prisoner in his room for two or three weeks.

He wants us to tell you to send you: orders direct to the factory during the time he's in the "Sick Bay"—so there will be no delay in getting the material to you. Naturally, the credit goes to Mr. Floyd.

I've promised Mr. Floyd that I'd give your inquiries and orders my personal attention. You know, we've just got to keep up his fine record . . . and that's not easy.

For anything you need in a hurry, use the enclosed prepaid envelope. Needless to add, your business is something we value beyond words, and we enjoy serving you.

Cordially indeed,

Dear Mr. Cameron:

Would you care to have, with our compliments, a unique little book that we have been laboring over rather lovingly?

You remember that at 5:00 P. M., on December 11, 1936, the whole English-speaking world was grouped around its loud-speaker, waiting with ill-concealed emotion and hearts a-flutter for the most momentous words radio ever broadcast.

A little huskily the voice began to speak. "At long last," it said, and you were hearing<sup>\*</sup>the then King Edward VIII renounce the throne of England for love of a woman. History was being made before your very ears.

Well, Mr. Arthur H. Little also heard that speech. He thought it a masterpiece of eloquence and of English. He wrote an "appreciation" of it, in the form of an article for *Printers' Ink*. To drive home the beauty, the essential rightness of it, he tried to re-write it in ponderous, vague, sonorous, "good-talk" terms. A few paragraphs, and he quit in admiring despair.

We have done Mr. Little's splendid tribute into a handsome booklet, to save it from the short life to which a weekly magazine condemns it. The King's speech is there, as he gave it; and Mr. Little's futile and fragmentary translation of it into "good-talk"; and Mr. Little's "appreciation" of it.

500 copies of "The King's English" have been printed; and if you would like a copy, please let us know. Your interest in the booklet cancels, we assure you, any slight obligation to its printer.

Very truly yours,

Dear Friend Gleason:

This is not a dunning letter.

Neither is it an attempt to gloss over a serious situation with fancy language concealing a strong-arm attempt to pry money out of you.

Time and distance make it impossible for me to come to you for a friendly chat, so I must ask you to accept this letter as the next best thing.

You owe us \$250, long past due. You have always paid your commitments promptly. Therefore there must be some special reason for your delay in this case.

I am not so much interested in the cause of this delay, however, as I am in how we can help you over the rough spot. If one can't look to his friends for help in times of stress, who on earth CAN he look to—and I hope our past relationship entitles us to be classed among your friends.

We want our money, of course. But we also want to keep your friendship. I am sure we can accomplish both ends by being entirely frank with each other.

What is wrong? What can we do to help you?

I suggest you write me in full, in confidence. Perhaps between us we can work out some plan whereby you can take care of the past-due balance without crowding yourself too much and, at the same time, we can continue to make shipments to take care of your immediate needs.

This is a frank letter. It calls for equal frankness from you.

If you will use the enclosed, self-addressed envelope, your reply will come direct to my desk, unopened.

Sincerely,

Dear Mr. Brown:

It is true that my first job on the Illinois Central was in the position of rodman. That was in 1896. I was a graduate of Purdue University, having completed the general academic work and also the course in civil engineering.

While I was a rodman the thought never occurred to me that I might some day be president of the railroad. My immediate concern was to be a good rodman, and after I had mastered that job I began figuring on what I might do next. The usual line of promotion in that department is from rodman to instrumentman, so I began to prepare myself to be an instrumentman. After awhile my chance came, and I was promoted. With each advancement in the organization, I went through the same experience—first endeavoring to do my immediate work thoroughly and later undertaking to prepare myself for the next step.

There are several thousand employees in our organization, and only one of them can hold my present position at any one time. However, every position in the organization is worth any man's best efforts.

Of course, the same is true of every other organization.

I send you my best wishes.

Cordially yours,

Dear Steve:

Jack Dempsey was my idea of what a real world's champion should be. I believe right now he could knock over most of these stiffness posing as top-notchers if his legs would hold him up. However, Jack was beaten—not once, but twice by the same man. Sooner or later, old man age bowls them all over.

Strange as it may seem, the rock, sand and cement business is somewhat like the prize fighting game.

I like to remember Dempsey as a real guy. True, he was licked twice, but that's no reason I should be off him like a dirty shirt. Is it, Steve?

We were champions in the service with you for a long time. It is true that the "legs" we used failed to come through a couple of times. However, we often came out winners on tougher battles than those we lost.

Our experience on those two jobs of yours taught us a good lesson. Those trucks we had were champions in their day, but that day had passed. Jack Dempsey couldn't buy a new pair of legs—but we could, and *did* buy new trucks. As you undoubtedly know, we have invested about a quarter of a million dollars in new delivery equipment, which again puts us on the winning side, and minimizes chances for delay to our customers.

Steve, we have really staged a successful comeback on our service. We are as near as your telephone, and will welcome your placing a bet on us like money from home.

Yours very truly,

Dear Sir:

"I'll pay you back Saturday," he declared, as I loaned him a five-dollar bill to tide him over until payday.

But on Saturday, when he saw me half a block down the street, he turned around quickly and walked the other way. He still owes me that \$5.00.

Now I can't believe that if you saw me coming down the street you would turn and walk the other way just because you owe me \$17.85. You would walk right up to me and pay me, if you had the money. And even if you didn't have the money you would walk up to me and tell me just what was wrong. You would want to get the matter straightened out right then and there. Wouldn't you?

I don't know how you look at it, but it seems to me that your failure to pay us this \$17.85, plus your failure to answer any of our letters, puts you pretty close to being like the fellow who walks the other way whenever he sees a creditor coming.

Why don't you straighten out this little matter? Send us a check and get it off your mind. Or, if there is any reason why you cannot send a check, just acknowledge this letter and tell us about it. That's the straightforward, man-to-man way to handle it, isn't it?

Yours truly,

Dear Friend Rayman:

Although you say, friend Rayman, that you will quit doing business with us if we insist that you pay the unearned discount deducted from our invoice of April 10th, I honestly believe it would be the other way around. I say this because few of us have any respect for those who do not stand for their rights. And we are within our rights, else I wouldn't write.

Let's suppose a man came to you and bought a bill of goods. Upon buying, he asked for the cash price and the term price. Then, suppose he waited until long after the term period had expired, and then pays you the cash price. Wouldn't you, friend Rayman, go to him and say he was still owing you a difference? I believe that you would.

Now, that is our position exactly. When we offered our proposition we, in effect, said to your buyer: "If you pay our invoice within 70 days, you may deduct 4% as a cash discount. But if the bill is not paid after 70 days, then, the invoice is net. The discount privilege is lost."

This term proposition was accepted when you bought \$101.60 worth of our rugs on April 10. The last day for discounting was June 20. But your accountant didn't mail the check until August 6—or 47 days after the last discount date. When he did he deducted a discount that was no longer available.

What would you do, friend Rayman, were you in our place? Would you ask for the \$3.97 erroneously deducted? If you wouldn't, say nothing, and we'll write it off, never saying another word about it. But if you would, then you will know what to do with the stamped envelope I enclose.

With best wishes,

Dear Mr. Auchincloss:

Your decision to retire as a director of the Illinois Central has been received with very keen regret by the directors and also by the officers of the railroad. For myself, I regard your retirement as a deep personal loss.

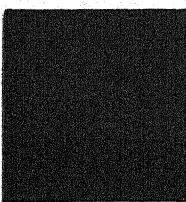
The ties of nearly half a century are not easily broken in any case, and in the case of a man of your accustomed vigor and devotion to duty I know this decision was a hard one to make. As compensation for the sacrifice, however, you have the knowledge of an extraordinary length of responsibility ably and conscientiously performed. Your service as a director has covered more than half the history of our railroad, and you have participated in decisions which have more than doubled its mileage and have multiplied its capacity and efficiency many times.

Your faithfulness in attendance upon the annual inspection trips has endeared you to many members of our organization, few of whom have ever rendered longer service than your own. They too will regret your retirement.

My own work as officer and director has benefited from the example and counsel derived from your seniority in years and experience. For that I thank you. It is my earnest wish that the relinquishment of the cares which you have borne so faithfully may result in your improved health.

Sincerely,

Dear Mr. Mansworthy:



This is a picture of a man and his wife sitting in a jet black room with their jet black cat. New deals may come—new deals may go, but they know nothing of them.

Far be it from us to suggest that life will turn black if you fail to resubscribe to News-WEEK, but the fact is that you have not yet renewed your subscription.

We urge you to take no chances of blacking out this illuminating source of information on world wide events. Be sure of the next 104 issues of News-WEEK for only six dollars—the most economical investment in news today! Or, if you prefer, make sure of the next 52 issues for only four dollars. Mark the card with your instructions. We will bill you if you prefer. Won't you sign it and mail it today?

Very truly yours,

**AN EXPLANATION OF GOLF**

Golf is a form of work made expensive enough for a rich man to enjoy it. It is physical and mental exertion made attractive by the fact that you have to dress for it in a \$200,000 clubhouse.

Golf is what letter-carrying ditch-digging and carpet-beating would be if these three tasks had to be performed on the same hot afternoon, in short pants and colored sox, by gouty-looking gentlemen who required a different implement for every mood.

Golf is the simplest-looking game in the world when you decide to take it up, and the toughest-looking after you have been at it 10 or 12 years.

It is probably the only known game a man can play as long as a quarter of a century and then discover that it was too deep for him in the first place.

A golf course has 18 holes, 17 of which are unnecessary and put in to make the game harder. A "hole" is a tin cup in the center of a "green." A green is a small parcel of grass costing about \$1.98 a blade, and a lot of unfinished excavations.

The idea is to get the golf ball from a given point into each of the 18 cups in the fewest strokes and the greatest number of words.

The ball must not be thrown, pushed or carried. It must be propelled entirely by about \$200 worth of curious-looking instruments especially designed to provoke the owner.

Each implement has a specific purpose, and ultimately some golfers get to know what that purpose is. They are the exceptions.

After each hole has been completed, the golfer counts his strokes. Then he subtracts 6 and says, "Made that in 5. That's one above par. Shall we play for 50 cents on the next hole, too, Ed?"

After the final, or 18th hole, the golfer adds up his score and stops when he has reached 87. He then has a swim, a pint of           , sings "Sweet Adeline" with six other liars, and calls it the end of a perfect day.

*San Francisco Kiwanian.*

Dear Sir:

You cannot buy an insurance policy that will guarantee you against a hook or a slice; but we can give you a policy that will keep some smart lawyer from hooking your bankroll or taking a slice out of your possessions in the event that you have an accident while golfing.

If\* golf is your only sport, we recommend the combination policy described; Personal Injury Liability, \$15,000/30,-000; Property Damage Liability \$1,000; Loss or Damage to Golf Equipment, \$200.00. Cost \$20.07 for three years.

If you engage in other sports, the broader sports and pastimes policy will be needed, as described in the other circular.

Fill out the information below, and we shall be glad to send you a policy for your approval.

Very truly yours,

\*\*\*\*\*

Name .....

Address .....

Golfers Liability..... Limits Wanted.....

Sports Liability..... Limits Wanted.....

Property Damage Liability..... Limit \$1000

Golfers Equipment Insurance..... Limit \$200

Dear Miss Doe:

It was Thursday evening—the School Board was in session.

There had been a lot of spirited discussion throughout the evening—all items had been disposed of—except one. Down at the bottom of the President's memo were but two words: "Miss Meredith."

To the School Board it was merely another item of business routine—but to Miss Meredith it was a matter which affected her entire future.

The Board quickly decided: "She has served faithfully and well, but we need younger blood. She has always proven very capable, but she's getting a bit too old to teach. Her health isn't the best, and much as we regret it she will have to be replaced."

The above incident is tragic, but not unusual. In fact, it is a typical experience which might be multiplied many times daily. And in all cases, the fate of the teacher hangs in the balance.

One of these days, perhaps, *your* name will be scrawled on the President's memorandum.

Right now, Miss Doe, that day seems far removed, but come it will, as it finally must to all in the teaching profession. Just how will the decision of the Board affect you? With your earnings reduced, or perhaps eliminated entirely, how will you live? Will you be compelled to throw yourself on the charity of friends—or will you mark the day as the beginning of a new era, bringing release from class-room duties, the thrills of a trip 'round the world, the opportunity to pursue a hobby, a future free from money worries?

Thousands of teachers have already adopted the Income Reserve Plan. Perhaps it may appeal to you—but first let us suggest you send for the free booklet, "Money for the Wonderful Things all Women Crave." The card is for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

My dear Mr. Aspley:

I hope you slept well last night—I didn't. I kept thinking about the youngsters who have been coming to us here at Travelers Aid ever since those first few warm days we had; boys of twelve—fourteen—sixteen—all of them bitten by the urge to travel.

I kept thinking, too, about the hundreds more of whom these are just the first harbingers—typical American boys, arriving here all hours of the day and night—hungry and dirty and weary.

Of course it's wrong for them to leave their homes—most of 'em, that is. I don't blame some of them, and neither would you, if you knew what they left. It's an old story to us: family on relief, which means a mere subsistence diet (try and raise a 14-year-old on that!); father not working or no longer at home (a surprising number have deserted); lots of brothers and sisters (the smaller ones invariably sick from mal-nourishment).

Is it any wonder that the 'teen-age boys run away—believing that in so doing there'll be more for the younger ones to eat—hoping somewhere, somehow to find something better? A hundred years ago, you'd have called them pioneers—now, they're just dependent non-resident juveniles and somebody has to take care of them.

We feed them and house them temporarily and get in touch with the home community to find out why they ran away and what can be done to correct home conditions before they're returned. Sometimes, of course, it's pretty hopeless and occasionally we even recommend that a boy be kept in Chicago where he may have a chance.

Whichever we do costs money—and it's money well spent. These boys are not pampered, but they are taken care of. We're not apologizing for them—we're sincerely trying to help them. That's a difficult job here in Chicago and if you think it's worthwhile and would like to help by sending ten dollars we'll be mighty glad to have it.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Mr. Frailey:

Did it ever occur to you that your trees are as important to your home grounds as your teeth are to yourself?—yet so many people take them for granted.

Naturally, you see your dentist twice a year in order that any minor defects may be corrected before any serious damage has been done, but HOW OFTEN DO YOU HAVE A DOCTOR LOOK AT YOUR TREES? They develop cavities just the same as your teeth and if not taken care of in time, the trouble spreads, and as a result, there will be a much larger repair bill; or even worse, the tree may have to be removed.

Your trees may be suffering from lack of food, and need trimming, or they may be afflicted with one of the various scale diseases.

Why not let me send Mr. Price to examine your trees? No obligation, of course. Just mail the enclosed card or call Rogers Park 1964 or Glenview 87.

Yours very truly,

Dear Mr. Meyer:

If your boss suddenly fired you without telling you why, after you'd been doing your darndest to make good with him, you'd surely feel like going to him and asking him:

"How about it, Boss? I guess I've got it coming to me, but won't you tell me why?"

You've been our boss for a year. We people working to make PETROLEUM MARKETER have been working for you, and it looks like we've fallen down somewhere along the line because you fired us recently. Your subscription was not renewed, and we are no longer in your employ though we'd like very much to be.

Maybe our name got left off the payroll through mistake; maybe we should have been fired, but we're right back looking for our old job. Of course, if you just naturally don't want us hanging around the place any more, please make notation on the enclosed order blank and drop it in the mail.

We want to work another year for you; the enclosed order blank is our application.

Here's hoping we will soon be permitted to come back on the job!

Cordially yours,

Dear Dr. Molner:

What would YOU do if you had an account like this?

It isn't large . . . by itself . . . but how a group of them can count up! And when they are for small amounts like this, how hard it is not to lose all your legitimate profit—and more—on collection expense!

We were glad to extend open account terms to you—and although this has run far beyond the usual 30 days, isn't it true that we've been fairly decent about waiting this long for our money?

There, in a few short lines, is our whole case. We don't want to be unpleasant. Most certainly we don't want to subject you to annoyance by turning over this little bill to a collection agency.

We want your goodwill. We'd like to count you among our preferred customers. I cannot believe that you want us to suffer a loss because of our good faith in sending your order without cash in advance.

So I am enclosing an addressed envelope that needs no postage, and I am appealing to you to use it—this moment—to send the small sum owing to us.

Please!

Dear Mr. Willis:

## TWO MEN WENT DOWN TO THE BASEMENT

One went down to fire the furnace. He wasn't in the mood. He would far rather have plumped into his easy chair with his favorite pipe and the evening paper. But this was out of the question. The house was cool—uncomfortably cool. So down to the basement he went.

What happened then? First, a battle to coax warmth from a stubborn heating plant. Perhaps the shovel hit the furnace door a few times, jarring the man's disposition and spilling coal dirt on the floor. This mess had to be swept up after numerous other furnace tending tasks had been performed. Next, grimy hands were washed. Then upstairs to a round of draft regulating and a brief interlude of comfort. This day-after-day routine can leave no doubt in our minds. *The heating plant is boss.*

Consider the second man. He also went down to the basement. But what a difference! His basement was clean and bright. In one corner were an easy chair, reading lamp, and smoking stand. An ideal spot for a quiet smoke and a look at the news. There was no voice from upstairs reminding this man of coal to be shoveled or a grate to be shaken. Every thought of these distasteful tasks vanished after a grateful glance at the Williams Oil-O-Matic.

Don't let the heating plant dominate your home life. Find out now—before another day has passed—how little it really costs to enjoy Oil-O-Matic heat without work or worry. Telephone today for a FREE Heating Survey. This will prove an accurate estimate of how much Oil-O-Matic heating will cost in your home. Installed in your present heating plant in but a few hours' time. Act now while present prices are in effect.

Very truly yours,

Dear Friend:

Way back in 1623, a small group of Pilgrims gathered in their small fish huts to name this fishing port Gloucester. They were a hardy lot of folks, living mostly on game and salt water fish. They built small boats and braved the treacherous waters off Gloucester to get fish for their families. In those times women folks helped too—for every hand meant more food for the cold winter months to come.

I remember, as a small boy, my father telling me about being lashed to the mainmast in a stiff blow, when his father's schooner was half buried in the plunging sea. It was a hard life. But still, Gloucester boys follow it year after year. It's in our blood. It's our way of Livin'. Nature has located us close to the richest waters there are.

Have you ever wondered why Gloucester is one of the greatest fishing ports in the world? You see, we have many varieties of delicious fish landed here daily. More good fish come right in here to Gloucester than any other port in the world. That's why you can never say you've tasted fish at its perfect prime unless you get it direct from Gloucester.

So you won't mind, will you, if I ship some of my fish direct to your home? It won't cost you anything, unless you feel like keeping it. All I ask is that you try the fish at my expense, and judge for yourself whether it isn't exactly what you have always wanted.

On the inclosed cards you will find a full description of the THREE SPECIAL OFFERS I am making. If you are like most of my regular customers, you will choose my Special Get-Acquainted Assortment. I've made up this package to let people know how good all my fish are. You see, I can tell people that I give them the first pick of the finest, primest catches. But the best way to let them know that my fish is exactly what I say, is to send a generous meal-size package of 14 different kinds of seafoods—to taste! That's just what you get in my Get-Ac-

quainted Assortment; fourteen different varieties of delicious seafoods, that will tell you as no fine writing ever can, what a real treat it is to eat fish shipped direct to your home from the fishing smacks.

Then, there's my special deep-sea Lobster Offer! Each package comes to you with no shell, no waste, just the tasty, flavorful meat of a two pound lobster. And when you come to compare prices, you will find that my lobster—even though more tender than the ordinary kind—COSTS LESS THAN HALF for what you actually eat! And on the third card, you'll find dainty Sardines in Olive Oil—a new pack, delicious, and each package ready for instant use.

For 52 years we have been selecting the primest grades of ocean fish to be sent direct from the fishing boats to our customers. And it is real pride on our part to know that thousands of families have found our fish so much better than any they could get locally that season in and season out they send us their orders.

Today, I invite *you* to join them. I want you to know the satisfying taste of fresh-caught, prime-grade seafoods. If you have never tasted anything but the kind you get in stores, there's a real treat awaiting you. Read the cards inclosed now, and see how you can get one or all of my Introductory Offers without sending a penny in advance. All you do is check the offer you want, fill in the card, and your seafoods will be on the way to you the very day I hear from you. You pay nothing, unless you are perfectly satisfied that my fish really are the best.

It is just this way that we secured our thousands of customers. So you know before hand that you can send your order with full confidence. You know in advance that you will get the choicest, tenderest, fullest-flavored seafood that you have ever tasted. Check and sign the inclosed postcards and mail them to me—TODAY. They require no stamps.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Bob:

Twenty-five years ago, on the night of August 12, 1912, a big, raw-boned youngster swung off a Michigan Central day-coach at Kalamazoo, and for the first time in his life, set foot on United States soil. There was no band to welcome him. No one to give him the keys to the city. Even the hack drivers hardly gave him a glance. They knew there would not be enough money rattling around in the boy's pockets to make it worth their while; he was too obviously "from the country."

And they were right about it. The smell of the soil and of the cow barn was still on his clothes, and his hands were covered with the callouses that come only from the handles of pitchforks and the "faucets" of cows.

Early the next morning found this boy trudging along a dusty road to a spot three miles north of Kalamazoo where, in the middle of a corn field, another immigrant boy was dreaming and sweating a piddling little converting plant into a gigantic paper mill. The new boy had heard there might be a job. The older one sized him up, saw that he fitted into the design on the trestleboard, and that is how Doc Southon, at seven o'clock in the morning of August 13, 1912, met Jacob Kindleberger and went to work for KVP.

I think you know much of what had gone on before, and of what happened thereafter . . . how that, discouraged by two years looking for work in his native London and not finding it, he borrowed money and sailed by steerage for Canada . . . landed in Halifax in February, 1910 . . . was sent to Leamington, Ontario, by an employment agency with the promise of a job waiting . . . found it a false report . . . walked the streets all night in the snow with only 6¢ in his pockets . . . hired out to a farmer the next morning although he had never had a farm tool in his hands before . . . milked cows and tended tobacco crops for the next two and a half years.

Then the trip to Kalamazoo on the hearsay evidence there might be a job. First, a job as a clerk . . . but that was only a title. In those days, everyone from J.K. on down pushed trucks, shov-

eled coal, hustled broke, tied bundles . . . did everything there was to do. Next a road job in '14, selling ice blankets. Before long, production. Then a hand in sales, general sales manager and 3rd vice-president in '25. First vice-president and director in '36.

That's pretty sketchy, but it gives the high spots. Some mighty low ones, too for that matter.

Twenty-five years of Doc's kind of Hard Work and Loyalty calls for some real recognition. Now don't reach for your check book . . . this is something a darned sight more important than golf bags and loving cups . . . something that will please him a thousand times more.

Just send him some ORDERS.

Now don't think I'm crazy. I know just as well as you do that you have orders in here since last May that are still unshipped . . . that you are afraid to face some of your customers without a body guard . . . that you are scared to call on others for fear they will make you take an order.

That condition, however, does not apply on two lines. Those lines are PARCHMENT and SPECIALTY. We can still handle BIG increases in both. And both can be highly profitable.

So what we are asking is this . . . will you go out everyday between now and Labor Day, determined to make the next five weeks the greatest weeks for PARCHMENT and SPECIALTY orders in the mill's history?

You will? That's great! Not that I had any doubt about it . . . in fact, I was all prepared. For in this mail, you should also find a packet of stickers like the one attached . . . ONE FOR DOC.

Put one on every PARCHMENT and SPECIALTY order you send in between now and Labor Day, and on the envelope, too.

Let's pile them in until the bloody Henglishman yells for "elp!"

ONE FOR DOC

Dear Mr. Blank:

You know it's the usual thing, when no answer is received to a collection letter, for most people to josh themselves into thinking that it was overlooked.

But I am frank enough to admit that I believe you did not answer my letter, with a check, because you perhaps didn't have the money right then. Am I right?

You see, I am taking it for granted that you would feel just as we do if conditions were reversed, so I am appealing to your sense of fairness.

Don't you think it would be only fair to send what is due, after we have waited so long a time?

Think it over, Mr. Blank, and if you cannot send a check today, let me know when to expect one. This little courtesy won't take very much of your time, and we will appreciate it.

The addressed envelope is for your convenience.

Yours truly,

Dear Mr. Sears:

The first thing you do with a new deal is to sort the cards and determine the strength of the hand. That's exactly what we have been doing with the New Year which Father Time has just placed at our disposal. We have taken inventory of our assets, and tried to decide the best way to use them against the forces that play against us.

Just as in card playing, there are always opponents to be met in business. Unreasonable legislation, depressed economic conditions, unfair competition—these and other things make some of the hands pretty tough to play. You know what I mean, because for many years you have been sitting across the table from us — a partner to our business.

Frankly, the deal months looks better in a long time. The playing close to the belt managed to stick in the game. The time has come for a few on together to win some grand slams.

for the next twelve than any we have had opposition has had us since 1929, but we man-

Things are different now. jump bids, and we are going

One thing is certain. Customers are trumps with us, and among them you are Ace High. As we start the New Year, we are very grateful for all that you have meant in our business. No matter how poor the deal in the past, it seems that your card has always appeared in our hand—to give us courage in the difficult moments, and confidence that eventually ours would be the victory.

So pick up your cards, partner. Let's bid 'em right, and play 'em tight. We're going places this year. And it's mighty glad I am to see you still sitting there—across the table.

Trumpingly yours,

\* \* \* \* \*

So now we come to the end of this little book. I don't suppose anyone has ever written a book and been entirely satisfied. Certainly I am not. So much has had to be left out—so much could have been said in a better way.

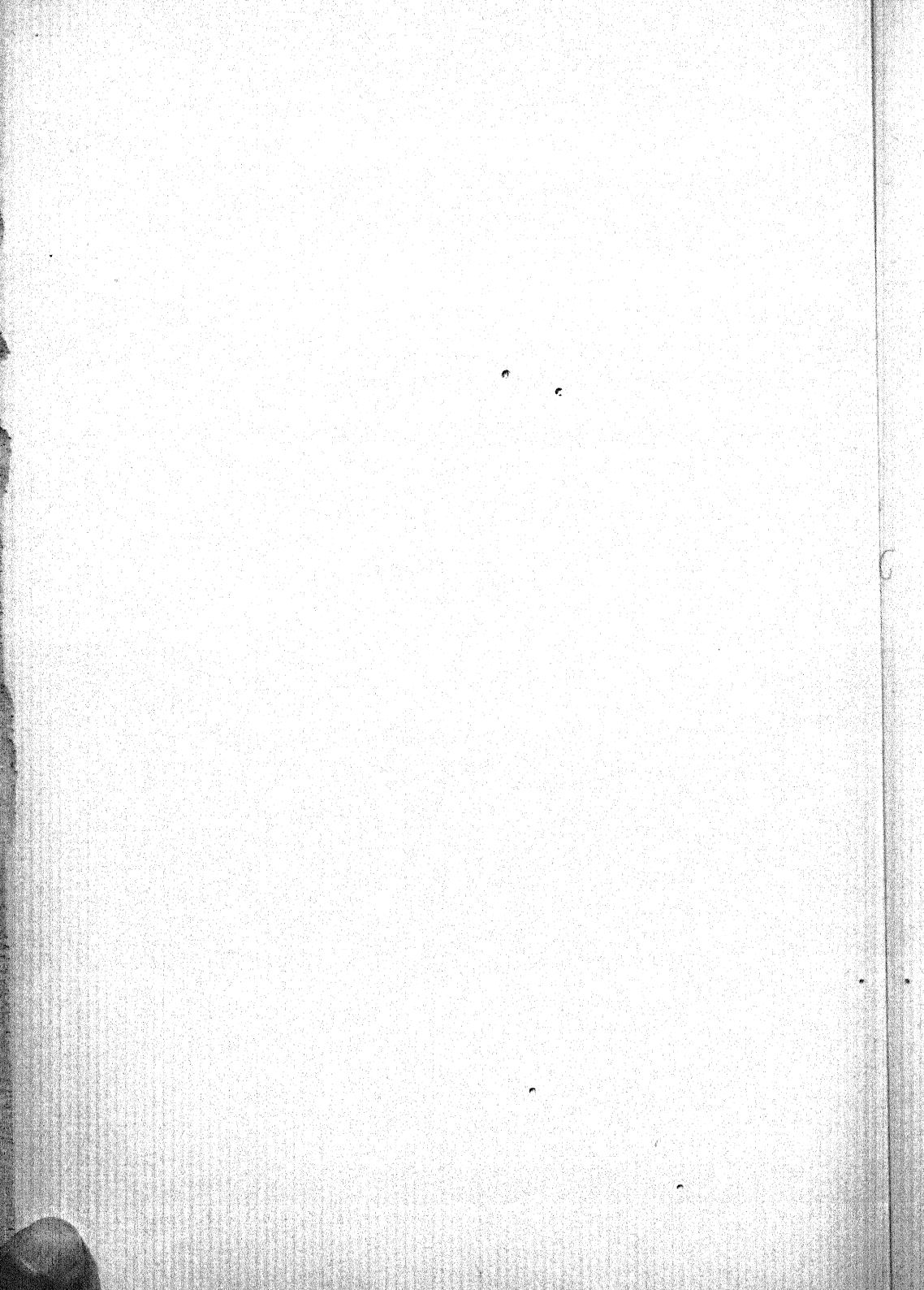
But, just the same, it has been good to meet you—even in this book.

Keep the standard high. Make every letter that you write reflect the glory and the friendliness of the company that you serve. Let the goodwill in your heart go along with every letter you send.

And in all that you write—or all that you do in this world—I wish you the joy that comes from a job well done!

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